

Sahar Joakim

Mission Statement on Transformative Learning

My goal as a person is to inspire people within and beyond my community to think and act well, to do and be good. By May of 2020, I will have taught about 130 undergraduate students at a Jesuit institution. As an instructor, I am sensitive to teaching various approaches through several methods so that my lessons suit a person of any faith and can inspire even those without any to do and be good.

Saint Louis University selects ten faculty members each year for a Faculty Excellence Award. These are student-nominated faculty members vetted by the Student Government Association. Two of these have been named after leading members of the community, one of which is Fr. James Veltrie, S.J. who lived 62 years as a Jesuit while 49 as a priest. I researched his life after being selected for the Fr. James Veltrie, S.J. Cura Personalis Faculty Excellence Award, and I smiled reading about his spiritual and professional journey. The award in his name recognizes one faculty member in the university who teaches their students with care for the whole person. I am honored to be identified as having effectively engaged in transformative learning, it is my mission as a teacher.

By my lights, academia ought to enhance society with better citizens through education, and philosophy classes ought to engage in real-world implications of the studied theories such that lessons in ethics classes, for example, foster more ethically responsible individuals. I empower my students academically and personally and prepare them to lead extraordinary lives by forging in them a habit for examining every aspect of their journey.

Attesting to my statement, here are some comments from my student's evaluations:

"I am not a philosophy major (or minor), this course was taken simply to satisfy a core credit. That said, this course and being a student in her class this semester has changed my perspective on things in such a positive and important way... She takes hard ethical concepts that tend to draw divisions among people and encourages conversation on all sides. She has no agenda to make her students all think alike, instead she focused on providing information and resources and allowed us to find out what each of us felt passionate about and defend it. She drove us to address ethics by building a foundation for the opinions we have, force us to think about things we've never needed an opinion on, and listen to those who have opinions different from us. I truly feel that I am a better person for having learned from Miss. Joakim. I feel more well rounded as a student and as a citizen and as a human being."

"The course was very important to my development as a student, but also as a person."

"Her lessons are irreplaceable and will stick with me for the rest of my life... She taught me about how to be myself. To be assertive. To have opinions. To think for myself and make my own rules. To hold myself to a higher standard."