What you may think this is about:

• your conception of teaching and learning
• a description of how you teach
• justification for why you teach that way
• reflection about your teaching
• your goals as an instructor and your corresponding actions in the classroom
• an opportunity to tie together the other sections of your portfolio

No.

Unless you have extensive teaching experience (which you may), you probably don’t have a philosophy. Don’t pretend to. It is rather off-putting. Additionally, while R1 institutions want good teachers, they don’t expect you to have extensive teaching experience and research. If you have…

(Disclaimer: If you are applying to a teaching institution, then you definitely need to address these items.)
• To find out what you would teach in the department should you be hired.

• This is becoming a serious concern as departments are hiring people who don’t necessarily have degrees in that field.

• If you fall in this category, answer this question, directly and succinctly.

• If you don’t fall in this category, answer this question anyway – because everyone else is!
How to make it memorable

• Put your name on it – your name should appear on every page of your application

• Refer to the department specifically; ideally, refer to specific courses in the department – show you have done your research

• In addition to saying where you would fit in with the current courses, mention one additional course you would want to develop and how it fits in with the curriculum; you must define this course – what it would cover, why students would be interested in it, etc.
Teaching is more than teaching

• Teaching isn’t just about coursework

• Teaching is also about mentoring undergraduates, specifically through undergraduate research

• If you have any experience working with undergrads (or mentoring graduate students, if you are a post-doc), this is the place to bring it up – and mention if you plan to work with undergrads in your lab (=NSF funding)
• Keep it under 1 page
  • no one is going to read more than 1 page

• Put it at the end of the packet

• Delineate it from the research statement with a heading

• Make sure your name is on it