

## **Advising Philosophy – Rebecca Baggett**

The dancer/choreographer Martha Graham once wrote to Agnes de Mille:

There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action. And because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique and if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium, and be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business . . . to determine how good it is, nor how valuable, nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep the channel open.

My primary goal as an advisor is to help, encourage, and support my students in their quest for their own “unique expression.” I believe the main job for any educator is to foster recognition of one’s talents and their development. For many students, this means encouraging them to recognize what most interests and excites them and to pursue study in that field; for some, it requires more intense support. Many of my students experience major crises – serious illness, conflict with parents, personal issues which affect their ability to focus academically, or goals which do not reflect their true interests or strengths. I “preach” what I truly believe: the intrinsic and enduring value of a liberal arts education, the importance of passion and commitment in one’s education and one’s life work (both paid and unpaid), the solace of good books and good friends, that many, many things are more worth pursuing than six-figure salaries and “high-powered” careers.