

PERSPECTIVES ON ADULT LITERACY

EADU 8040

Spring 2006

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Day and Time Wednesdays, 4:30-7:15pm

Overview

Many writers--especially those writing for the popular press--contend that adult illiteracy is one of the major social problems confronting modern society. Others contend that claims about the personal, social, economic, and political consequences of illiteracy rest on confused or unarticulated assumptions about the nature and value of adult literacy.

This seminar-style course will explore the critical and theoretical underpinnings of adult literacy. The purpose of the seminar is to foster clear thinking about adult literacy, adult illiteracy, and adult literacy education through broad reading, free-wheeling discussion, and focused writing.

The Details

Learning Format. With one exception, we will come together weekly to discuss important readings and key concepts related to adult literacy.

Course Readings. Most readings will come from a single "reader" that contains works by many of the most important writers in the area. Additional or alternate readings may also be selected.

Written Assignments. Each seminar session will focus on an assigned reading. In order to help you prepare for meaningful discussion, each student is required to prepare a one- to two-page reaction paper to the readings and *bring multiple copies* to class for distribution to class members. The papers must be critical in nature, move well beyond summarization, and be clearly related to the readings. The best papers focus on one or two important ideas rather than try to cover all the points in the reading.

Attendance. As in all graduate classes, you are expected to attend every session unless you have a good reason not to. If you must be absent,

please send me a brief email (either before or after class) telling me why you were absent. Absence does not excuse you from writing the reaction paper for the week missed. Please bring multiple copies of your late papers to the next session.

Grading. At the end of the semester, students will assemble a portfolio consisting of:

1. The twelve reaction papers they have written,
2. A paper copy of all the postings you contributed to the international discussion,
3. Paper copies of all emails explaining absences,
4. A three page cover memo addressing the question: Is adult illiteracy a pressing national problem? Why or why not? And what are the implications for adult education?

Individual meetings will be held at the end of the semester to evaluate your work.

Special Accommodations. If you have special learning needs, please let me know how I can help.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Sess.	Activities	
1/11	1	Class: Planning	
1/18	2	Discussion of Scribner's Three Metaphors (reaction papers due)	
1/25	3	Discussion: Ogbu and Levine (reaction papers due)	
2/1	4	Discussion: Lytle [22] and Purcell-Gates [23] (reaction papers due)	
2/8	5	Discussion: Olson [6] and Scribner & Cole [7] (reaction papers due)	
2/15	6	Discussion: Friere [35] (reaction papers due)	
2/22	7	Discussion: Street [25] and Heath [26] (reaction papers due)	
3/1	8	Discussion: Gee [30] and Delpit [31] (reaction papers due)	
3/8	9	Discussion: Ramdas [36] and Hull (38) (reaction papers due)	
3/15		<i>SPRING BREAK (no class)</i>	
3/22	10	Web work: No class meeting	International Literacy Education (Web-Discussion)
3/29	11	Class meeting: International Education (readings to be provided on the web)	
4/5	12	Literacy and Technology; guest presenter: Dr. Elizabeth Dillon-Marable Discussion: Baron [4] and Charney [5] (reaction papers due)	
4/12	13	Overview of Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages: Lori Garrett (readings to be assigned; reaction papers due)	
4/19	14	Discussion: Adams [18] (reaction papers due) Submit complete portfolio with cover memo	
4/24-4/28	15	Individual Portfolio review meetings (no class meeting)	