

Syllabus
ELAN 3461H: Issues in Literacy Education, Grades 7-12
Spring, 2008 12:20 – 2:15 Wednesday; Room 607
School/Service Learning Hours: To be arranged

Instructor information

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Course description

This is an honors course designed to introduce college sophomores and juniors to issues in literacy education by 1) identifying current issues in the field of language and literacy that present challenges and potential in an increasingly diverse culture, 2) observing and interacting with literacy teachers and learners, and 3) conducting inquiries aimed at revealing students' "apprenticeship of observation". The course is intended to provide college students who have an interest in becoming secondary teachers with the opportunity to examine their own experiences as students and then to pursue and extend their insights into secondary teaching as a career. After a period of reading, conversation, observation, and reflection on larger issues that complicate the teaching profession as a whole, students will develop exhibits and commentaries to reflect what they have learned.

The goals are for each student: 1) to become well informed in some area of teaching and learning, 2) to collaborate with peers to examine issues important to teachers of literacy, and, 3) by the end of the course, to have developed a portfolio that reflects those understandings as well as new areas of interest. The portfolio will serve as the final process and product of the course and function as a final examination.

It is my intent that students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students.

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; changes in the course plan will be negotiated with students and announced by the instructor.

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." All students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

Course targets for learners

1. Knowledge
 - a. Develop declarative knowledge (facts, generalizations, concepts) and language/discourse to explore (among other topics) current issues in English Education by reading texts,

- writing responses, participating in class discussions, and interacting with literacy teachers and learners.
- b. Develop procedural knowledge of inquiry process by collecting and analyzing data and then constructing a portfolio.
- 2.Reasoning
- a. Identify (based on experiences as former HS students and observations of secondary classroom teachers) at least one topic of particular interest to pursue during the course.
 - b. Demonstrate reasoning abilities situated within specific questions for investigation.
 - c. Collaborate with class colleagues to construct rationales for identifying problems and solutions to those problems.
- 3.Skills
- a. Examine criteria for “doing it well” as applied to honors students’ skills as readers, researchers, and problem-solvers.
 - b. Provide evidence of skills as readers, researchers, and problem-solvers through class conversations and course products/performances.
- 4.Products/Performances
- a. **Write a Learner Autobiography.**
 - b. **Present one 20-minute “briefing” on an issue in language and literacy that will be of interest to class members.** (Ex: tracking, assessment, testing, same-sex schools, SAE, NCLB, Small Learning Communities, inclusion classes, differentiating instruction, etc.)
 - c. **Post reading responses to the class listserv for assigned texts each week. (Post by Tuesday noon? Tuesday midnight?)**
 - d. **Create a glossary of terms commonly used by literacy educators.**
 - e. **Collect data based on focused inquiries in school-based and service learning contexts.** (Ex: classroom observations, classroom profile, student shadowing, teacher interviews, student reader-writer interviews, student case study, student work samples, etc.)
 - f. **Construct a portfolio synthesizing learning across the course.**
 - g. **Attend and participate in activities and discussions in class and in the field.**
- 5.Dispositions
- a. Practice “persistent critique” (i.e., to be willing to look at what we are able and unable to hear/think/know because of our identities as multicultural subjects; examine our situatedness in social/historical/cultural definitions of “teacher”).
 - b. Gain confidence as a teacher-learner and teacher-researcher.

Course readings

(Articles/chapters will be on WebCT **password = pagansally** or hard copies provided by instructor)

- Alsup & Bush (2003) Ch. 1-4 “*But Will It Work with REAL Students?*” *Scenarios for Teaching Secondary English Language Arts*
- Applebee (1996) Ch. 1 & 2 *Curriculum as Conversation*
- Black & Steinkuehler (2007) “Literacy in Virtual Worlds”
- Delpit (2003) “Teachers as ‘Seed People’ Growing a New Future”
- Erickson (1984) “School Literacy, Reasoning, and Civility: An Anthropologist’s Perspective” in *Perspectives on Literacy*
- Fecho (2004) “*Is This English?*” (selected chapters)
- Gee (1989) “What is Literacy?” in *Perspectives on Literacy*
- Gee (2002) Ch. 1 in *What Video Games Have to Teach Us about Learning and Literacy*
- Graham et.al (1999) *Teacher/Mentor: A Dialogue for Collaborative Learning* (selected chapters)

- Graham, Marshall, & Power (2007) “The Way We Teach Now: Teachers of English in the New World of High-Stakes Assessment”
- Hull & Rose (1990) “‘This Wooden Shack Place’: The Logic of an Unconventional Reading”
- Johannessen & McCann (2002) “When Do They Do Grammar?” *In Case You Teach English*
- Johnson (2006) “Performing A/Sexual Teacher: The Cartesian Duality in Education”
- Kutz & Roskelly (1991) *An Unquiet Pedagogy: Transforming Practice in the English Classroom* (selected chapters)
- Lortie (1975) *Schoolteacher, 2nd ed.* (selected chapters)
- Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez (1992) “Funds of Knowledge for Teaching: Using a Qualitative Approach to Connect Homes and Classrooms”
- Schultz & Hull (2002) “Locating Literacy Theory in Out-of-School Contexts”
- Shannon (1985) “Reading Instruction and Social Class” in *Perspectives on Literacy*
- Smagorinsky Ch. 10 “Teaching Grammar”
- Smagorinsky (2002) Ch. 11 “Multimedia Composing” *Teaching English Through Principled Practice* (and other selected chapters)
- Villegas & Lucas (2007) “The Culturally Responsive Teacher”
- Weaver (1996) Ch. 1, 2, 4, 5 *Teaching Grammar in Context*
- Wiggins (1989) “The Futility of Trying to Teach Everything of Importance”

Other chapters and articles to be announced later.

Course requirements

- a. **Learner Autobiography:** Write a 12-page paper describing and analyzing your experiences as an adolescent learner. (See handout.) (10%)
- b. **Issue Briefing:** Present 20-minute briefing and 1/2 page outline on an issue related to teaching and/or language and literacy learning. Address the following 4 questions in your briefing and outline: What is the issue? Why is the issue important to secondary teachers? What competing perspectives complicate the issue? What resources offer additional information on the issue? (10%)
- c. **Weekly Reading Responses:** For each set of articles and/or chapters you are assigned to read in a given week, you will be asked to post a response/reaction to the class listserv. These should be no more than a page in length. Rather than summarize the readings, these postings should raise questions, express doubts, make connections, or otherwise invite discussion. You may find it helpful to use response starters such as “I wonder...” “This makes me think about...” “I was surprised by...” “This reminds me of...” “This makes sense to me because...” “I question...” “I speculate that...” (10%)
- d. **Glossary:** Based on course readings and interaction with educators, construct a glossary, adding 2-3 words you encounter each week that are important to remember. (See handout.) (10%)
- e. **Data Collection and Written Reflections:** In the school and/or service learning contexts you visit, collect data based on focused classroom observations, school documents, teacher/student interviews, and student work samples. You may also be asked to interview first-year teachers, student teachers, and administrators with the expectation that you will transcribe portions of those interviews. You will then be asked to write reflective commentaries and/or profiles from this data. (25 %)

- f. Course Portfolio (Final Exam):** Each student will construct a portfolio based on 3-5 exhibits drawn from assignments and projects across the semester. The portfolio will act as the final exam for the course. (See handout.) (20%)
- g. Attendance and Active Participation -- Campus Class and School/Service Learning Visitations:** Faithful attendance and participation are required. Patterns of tardiness or absenteeism result in lower grades. Please contact your instructor/school sponsor by phone or email ahead of time if you are going to be absent from class. Keep a log of dates and times you are in the school or service learning context. (15%)

Grading

Students will receive models to guide their production of quality papers, projects and reading responses. Feedback and opportunities to revise should insure that students earn the grades they want to earn. Course requirements are “weighted” according to the relative value they hold for the course and the amount of time they are likely to require in order to complete satisfactorily.

Weekly Schedule

1/January 9	Introduction and Course Syllabus
2/January 16	Apprenticeship of Observation: Learner Autobiographies
3/January 23	Gee “What is Literacy?” Erickson “School Literacy, Reasoning, and Civility: An Anthropologist’s Perspective” Glossary #1

All plans after Week 3 are tentative and negotiable

4/January 30	Teacher Interview Assignment Delpit “Teachers as ‘Seed People’...” Wiggins “The Futility of Trying to Teach Everything of Importance” Hamilton “Sustainable Literacies and the Ecology of Lifelong Learning”
5/February 6	Student Interview Assignment Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez (1992) “Funds of Knowledge for Teaching” Schultz & Hull (2002) “Locating Literacy Theory in Out-of-School Contexts”
6/February 13	Student Shadowing Assignment: Student Profiles Villegas & Lucas “The Culturally Responsive Teacher” Glossary #2
7/February 20	Black & Steinkuehler “Literacy in Virtual Worlds” Hull & Rose (1990) “‘This Wooden Shack Place’: The Logic of an Unconventional Reading”
8/February 27	Midterm Conferences/Issue Briefing Topics & Data Collections

9/March 5	Teaching Reading Alsup & Bush Chapter 1
*/March 12	Spring Break
10/March 19	Teaching Writing: Student work samples Alsup & Bush Chapter 2 Briefing topic #1
11/March 26	Teaching Language and Grammar Alsup & Bush Chapter 3 Smagorinsky Ch. 10 "Teaching Grammar" Weaver chapters Briefing topic #2
12/April 2	English Language Learners Alsup & Bush Chapter 4 Cleary "A Profile of Carlos" Villegas & Lucas "The Culturally Responsive Teacher" Briefing topic #3
13/April 9	Images of Teachers Johnson "Performing A/Sexual Teacher"
14/April 16	
15/April 23	
16/April 30	Final Exam