

**CIED 5243: Special Methods of Instruction I**

Summer 2013

Grad Ed 146A

Monday-Friday: 9:15 AM - 10:45 AM

### Instructor: Dr. Sean Connors

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**Course Rationale**: This course examines issues related to teaching English language arts at the secondary level with a specific emphasis on writing instruction. In addition to examining the cognitive and social dimensions of writing, we’ll ask how literacy educators can best approach teaching writing in middle school, junior high, and high school settings. In doing so our objective will be to understand how, as English teachers, we can teach writing as a process, develop authentic writing assignments, respond to student work in meaningful ways, and enact writing instruction that aligns with the Common Core State Standards and prepares students for life beyond the classroom. We’ll also examine a range of theoretical perspectives to better understand how people learn to write and to assist us in constructing a conceptual toolkit we can use to think and talk critically about teaching and learning. Recognizing that our discussions will occasionally generate as many questions as they do answers, it’s important that you approach this graduate level course willing to wrestle with complex issues and problems for which there won’t necessarily be clearly defined solutions.

**Course Objectives:**

* Students will examine what it means to teach writing as a process that encompasses a range of functions, purposes, rhetorical situations, and categories of discourse.
* Students will evaluate the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching writing at the secondary level with the intention of explaining how the former influences the latter.
* Students will distinguish between presentational, natural and environmental modes of teaching.
* Students will explain how concepts such as “instructional scaffolding” and “environmental teaching” provide a framework for designing effective writing instruction.
* Students will design a mini-unit that aligns with the Common Core State Standards for argumentative writing with the intention of teaching it during their first student teaching rotation.
* Students will engage in critical discussions about the assigned readings with the intention of identifying core issues that confront literacy educators today.

**Essential Questions:**

* How is literacy a “social practice,” and how does acknowledging it as such shape the way that English language arts educators approach teaching?
* What does it mean to teach writing as a process, and what are the implications of acknowledging it as such for English teachers?
* What distinguishes the “presentational” mode of teaching from “environmental” teaching, and how, as English teachers, can we draw on the latter framework to design and enact meaningful writing instruction?
* In an era of Common Core State Standards, how can English teachers design and enact writing instruction that is responsive to adolescents’ ideas, experiences, and needs while also ensuring that they are college and career ready?

**Required Textbooks** (available at the University Bookstore / 616 N. Garland Avenue):

Gallagher, K. (2006). *Teaching Adolescent Writers.* Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Zemelman, S., & Daniels, H. (1988). *A community of writers: Teaching writing in the junior and senior*

*high school.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

**Course Policies:**

**Late Assignments**: Late work will be assessed a penalty of 15% (the equivalent of one letter grade). Written work submitted two days after the assigned due date will be evaluated upon request, but credit will not be granted.

**Incompletes**: Incompletes are not given except in the case of a documented medical emergency. If you choose to take an incomplete for any other reason, the default grade will be an “E.”

**Submission of Assignments**: All work turned in for evaluation should be typewritten and double-spaced, and should employ 1 inch margins on all sides. Please use 12-point font and a legible typeface. Be sure your printer toner allows you to produce clear copies prior to the date of submission. Written work submitted by email will not be accepted.

**Academic Honesty:** As a core part of its mission, the University of Arkansas provides students with the opportunity to further their educational goals through programs of study and research in an environment that promotes freedom of inquiry and academic responsibility. Accomplishing this mission is only possible when intellectual honesty and individual integrity prevail. Each University of Arkansas student is required to be familiar with and abide by the University’s “Academic Integrity Policy,” which may be found at http://provost.uark.edu/ Students with questions about how these policies apply to a particular course or assignment should immediately contact their instructor.

**Classroom Behavior:** Appropriate classroom behavior is expected of the instructor and all students. Inappropriate and disruptive classroom behavior (e.g., inappropriate language and gestures, class disruptions, disrespect to other students or instructor) will not be tolerated and will result in possible removal from the class and/or disciplinary action as per the student handbook.

**Accommodations:** Students with disabilities requesting reasonable accommodations must first register with the Center for Students with Disabilities. The CSD is located in the Arkansas Union, room 104 and on the web at: http://www.uark.edu/ua/csd/applications.htm The CSD provides documentation to students with disabilities who must them provide this documentation to their course instructors. Students with disabilities should notify their course instructors of their need for reasonable accommodations in a timely manner to ensure that sufficient time to arrange reasonable accommodation implementation and effectiveness. A typical time frame for arranging reasonable accommodations for students who are registered with the CSD is approximately one to two weeks.

**Inclement Weather:** In case of inclement weather, class will be held unless cancelled by the University of Arkansas. If classes have not been cancelled and the student feels it is too dangerous to come to class because of the weather, it is the responsibility of the student to make up missed assignments and be prepared for the next class meeting.

**Mobile Devices**: I have a family and understand the desire to have a mobile device available in case of emergencies. Please follow my lead by muting or putting your mobile device on vibrate and monitoring it as infrequently as possible.

**Course Requirements**:

**Attendance**: Given the importance of our work, your attendance and participation in class discussions is required. While you are allowed to miss one class, a second absence will lower your grade one letter. A third absence will lower your grade two letters, meaning that you can earn no higher than a “C”. A fourth absence will result in your failing the course. Please note that I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, except in the case of a documented medical emergency. If you are unable to attend class for any reason, it is your responsibility to e-mail me *in advance* and explain the situation. *If a student is tardy three times, it will be counted as an absence.*

**Literacy Survey** (10%): Early in the course you’ll design a literacy survey to administer to students in your first student teaching rotation. This assignment is intended to equip you with a tool you can use to generate background information about their attitudes toward—and experiences with—writing so that you can design lessons that focus on their specific learning needs. Your survey should focus on students’ experiences with writing (and to a lesser extent reading) in school as well as out-of-school, and should include questions that address the following subject areas:

* Students’ attitudes toward English language arts;
* Their experiences with school writing (what types of writing they enjoy, what types of writing they find challenging, etc.);
* Their perceptions of (and experiences with) how school writing assignments are evaluated and how grades are assigned;
* What kinds of instruction (activities, lectures, discussions, projects, assignments) they find more or less valuable, and why;
* What kinds of writing they do outside school (including journaling, email, IM, social media, etc.);
* Their self-assessment of their strengths and limitations as writers.

You’ll need to use open-ended questions in your survey, but you’re welcome to include one or two closed questions. Your survey should consist of no more than ten questions.

**Writer’s Notebook** (20%): In the same way that athletes best learn a sport by working with coaches who played it, students need to learn to write from English teachers who write on a regular basis. With that in mind, you’ll maintain a writer’s notebook throughout the course in which you generate ideas and topics to write about, experiment with strategies for teaching writing that you encounter in the assigned readings, monitor and assess your learning, and maintain course notes. The writer’s notebook will also serve as a space in which you experiment with the methods for teaching writing that we’ll explore in class. You are expected to have your writer’s notebook in class every day, as we’ll draw on it for class discussions and activities. You’ll also be asked (without prior notice) to submit your notebook at some point during the third or fourth week of the course so that I can read your work. **Note**: I am not concerned with *evaluating* the accuracy or “correctness” of your writing. Rather, I am interested in *responding* to your ideas. Also, note that I reserve the right to assign writing without indicating it on the course syllabus. This particular assignment is designed to ensure that you leave this course having thought about and grappled with the complexities of writing and having compiled a model writer’s notebook you can share with students in your first student teaching rotation.

**Six-Word Memoir** (5%): Legend has it that Ernest Hemingway was once challenged to tell an entire story in just six words. His final product was a memoir: “For sale: baby shoes, never worn.” As we begin the hard work of constructing a community of learners, you’ll be asked to compose a six-word memoir in which you share your own “life story.” Having done so, we’ll visit the computer lab where you’ll use Powerpoint to juxtapose your six-word memoir with an image that amplifies the meanings you wish to convey. Note that your six-word memoir will be published online to give you access to models you can share with students in your teaching rotations.

**Literacy Narrative** (15%): As we study what it means to teach writing as a process, you’ll compose a literacy narrative in which you share a personal story from your past about reading or writing. As the due date for the assignment approaches we’ll brainstorm ideas for stories you might potentially tell. The literacy narrative should be 500 words long, and the final draft should contain an inserted photograph/image that amplifies the meanings you sought to convey. Note that your literacy narrative will be published online to give you access to models you can share with students in your teaching rotations.

**Sample Lesson Plan and Teaching Demonstration** (25%)**:** You’ll be accountable for working with a partner to design and teach a 20 minute lesson in which you demonstrate one of the instructional approaches for teaching writing that Gallagher (2006) presents in his text. You’re free to select the approach you cover, as well as the content you explore. That said, if another group chooses the strategy first, you’ll need to select an alternative approach to focus on. The lesson you teach will be videotaped. Prior to teaching your lesson, you and your partner will compose a lesson plan that adheres to the template we’ll examine in class. You’ll also need to provide your peers and me with a copy of your lesson plan on the day you teach it. After you’ve taught your lesson, you and your partner will watch and evaluate the video of your teaching. You’ll then co-author a written reflection (4 double spaced pages) in which you: 1) summarize the objectives and Common Core standard toward which you were teaching; 2) explain how the lesson incorporated elements of environmental teaching, and to what effect; and, most importantly, 3) assess the strengths and weaknesses of your teaching. 4) Conclude your reflection by identifying specific steps you’ll take to strengthen your teaching moving forward. Teaching demonstrations will take place between July 23rd and July 25th. Written reflections are due the day after you teach (provided, of course, it isn’t a weekend). Make sure you and your partner each bring a flash drive on the day you teach to ensure that you’re able to take the video home with you.

**Mini-Unit Plan and Written Reflection**(25%): To conclude the course you’ll pull together the different threads of your learning to design a mini-unit plan that addresses Common Core State Standard W.8.1b: *Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.* Your unit should consist of three sequential lesson plans, each of which adheres to the template we’ll use in class. It should also include a summative assessment and a multi-trait scoring rubric, along with support materials you envision yourself using with students (e.g., mentor texts, handouts, etc.). Having assembled your unit, compose a reflective essay (approximately 5 double-spaced pages) in which you: 1) summarize your objectives for teaching the unit; 2) explain how it targets the aforementioned Common Core writing standard; 3) explain how it incorporates the four dimensions of Hillocks’ environmental mode of teaching; and 4) explain how it makes use of formative and summative assessments to gauge the extent to which students meet the target standard. 5) Conclude your reflection by evaluating the design of the unit. In doing so, make sure to identify specific aspects of planning that posed a challenge for you and which you feel you need to address moving forward. Draw on the assigned course readings to support your discussion when possible.

**Note:** The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus to accommodate unforeseen issues.

**Grading:** Grades will be assigned based on the instructor’s judgment as to whether the student has

satisfied the stated objectives of the course in the following manner:

**A** = 100-90 **B** = 89-80 **C** = 79-70 **D** = 69-60 **F** = 59-0

**Course Schedule**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Topics To Be Covered** | **Reading Assignments** | **Assignments Due** |
| 7/8 | *Course Introduction*:  Overview of Syllabus  Personalizing the Writer’s Notebook |  |  |
| 7/9 | *Rethinking Literacy as a Social Practice* | Heath, “The Functions”  Daly, “The Evocative World” | **Six-Word Memoir and Image** |
| 7/10 | *Thinking About Learning: Social Constructivism* | Phillips & Soltis, Ch. 6 |  |
| 7/11 | *Teaching Writing as a Process / Survey Revision Workshop* | Zemelman & Daniels, Chs. 1 and 2  Gallagher, Ch. 1 | **Draft of Literacy Survey** |
| 7/12 | *Organizing Student Learning: Lesson Planning* | Common Core Standards  Jackson, “The Lottery” | **Literacy Survey** |
| 7/15 | *The Environmental Mode of Teaching* | Hillocks, “Environments” |  |
| 7/16 | *Making One’s Writing Processes Visible: Modeling and Mentor Texts* | Gallagher, Chs. 3 and 4 |  |
| 7/17 | *Writing Our Way Into a Topic: Prewriting Strategies* | Zemelman & Daniels, Ch. 10  Gallagher, Ch. 5 |  |
| 7/18 | *Teaching Revision* | Zemelman & Daniels, Chs. 13 and 14 | **Draft of Literacy Narrative** |
| 7/19 | *Teacher Talk: “Expanding the Concept of Literacy” with Scott Sullivan* | Daly, “Expanding” | **Final Literacy Narrative** |
| 7/22 | *The Red (Pen) Scare: Rethinking Assessment* | Zemelman & Daniels, Ch. 17  Gallagher, Ch. 7 |  |
| 7/23 | *Sample Lesson Plan and Teaching Demonstrations* |  |  |
| 7/24 | *Sample Lesson Plan and Teaching Demonstrations* |  |  |
| 7/25 | *Sample Lesson Plan and Teaching Demonstrations* |  |  |
| 7/26 | *Structuring Student Learning Across Time: Unit Planning* | Wiggans & McTighe, “Backward Design” |  |
| 7/29 | *Writing to Learn and Learning to Write* | Zemelman & Daniels, Chs. 5 and 8  Gallagher, Ch. 2 |  |
| 7/30 | *Teacher Talk: “Thriving in the M.A.T.” with Sherry Pappas and Mallory Craig* |  |  |
| 7/31 | *Writing to Inform and Explain / Unit Revision Workshop* |  | **Draft of Unit Plan** |
| 8/1 | *Writing to Analyze and Interpret* |  |  |
| 8/2 | *What We’ve Learned* |  | **Unit Plan and Reflective Essay** |