

EDCI 479: Advanced Methods of Teaching English in the
Secondary School
Fall 2009
Tuesdays 4:30-7:10pm

Instructor: Dr. Alison Hruby
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Course Objectives:

This course will focus on the following four major areas of language arts instruction:

1. Applying Reader Response interpretation approaches (e.g., transactional theory, feminism, and Marxism) to literature instruction. The undergraduate students will be expected to read the related theoretical articles and book chapters on a basic level, looking for key definitions, practical ideas for the classroom, and examples of how English teachers use reader response theories to frame literature instruction.
2. Differentiating instruction for students (a) with various aptitudes for reading and (b) in various stages of English language acquisition.
3. Teaching essay writing
4. Teaching writing using a multimodal approach.

These objectives meet the following NCTE/IRA Standards for the English/Language Arts:

Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.

Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information)

The full list of NCTE/IRA standards can be found at <http://www.readwritethink.org/standards/>

Differentiation for Experienced and Practicing Teachers:

If you have at least two years of teaching experience recently behind you and you are currently teaching, you have the option of proposing a teacher inquiry project that would replace two of the required assignments for this course. The purpose of your teacher inquiry project would be to choose an aspect of your teaching related to essay writing or to the study of literature that you would like to improve upon. The format of the product you hand in for a grade is flexible, but would most likely include a short literature review, a reflection section, and a plan of action for improvement.

Course Format:

The format of the course will vary among small group discussion, mini-lectures with discussion, and group lesson plan presentations. Because you have much to learn from each other, and because teaching is often a collaborative effort, you will be working in groups quite often. This will give you a chance to bounce ideas off each other, to be exposed to a variety of perspectives (rather than only the professor's), and to support each other as you continue to hone your lesson plan skills.

Course Requirements

- **Attendance and Participation:** Attendance is critical to how this class will work. You will spend a great deal of time working on group activities to generate ideas for lesson and unit plan design and to share points you find interesting and useful from the course readings. If you must miss a class, please contact me ahead of time through e-mail and also contact a classmate to discuss missed activities and assignments. If you miss more than two classes, you will not be eligible for higher than a C in the course.
- **Punctuality and Conduct:** You are also expected to be in class on time and to conduct yourself in a way that is respectful to your classmates and to the professor. Please familiarize yourself with the George Mason University Honor Code at honorcode.gmu.edu Furthermore, Abstain from cell phones during class and limit your laptop use for lecture notes.
- **Academic Services.** Please inform me if you have a documented learning differences that requires changes in the course instruction or assignments.
- **Collection of Sample Readings.** (1) Immediately following the first course meeting, you should begin to think about a **poem/song** you would like to use for your Reader Response Lesson Plans (see Assignment #2 and # 7 in this section of the syllabus; you will use the same

poem or song for both lessons). The poem or song needs to represent a non-normative perspective or experience (we will go over what I mean by this during the second class meeting). (2) You should also start to gather a collection of at least **4 short readings** (articles, essays, short stories, introductory chapter from a novel, etc.) that you believe you might see included in a 6-12 English/language arts curriculum. You will use these readings during the final third of the course, when we are studying how to address the needs of struggling readers and ELL students. As long as the material is appropriate for a school setting and approximates the reading level of an adolescent, you can choose just about anything. Keep in mind, for example, that news articles are supposed to be written on a sixth grade level, so your middle school or high school students can be expected to handle them. I recommend the following sources: *Newsweek*, *Time*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *People Magazine*, *Us Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *blogs*, *Sports Illustrated*, and so on. (3) For our unit on Teaching Writing, we are going to discuss food and diet writing as an example of conflicting information and multiple perspectives or truths. Also keep your eye out for a book or **article on food or dieting** (how to eat, what to eat, what not to eat, etc.), which you will bring in to share with the class on November 10. I am hoping for a mix of pop culture pieces (e.g., from *Shape* magazine) and more serious journalistic pieces (e.g., something from Michael Pollan's work or from *The New York Times* Health section).

Required Course Texts

- (1) Course packet (for sale in bookstore)
- (2) *Critical Encounters in High School English, Second Edition* by Deborah Appleman * **make sure to buy the second edition.**
- (3) *Language Learners in the Classroom* by Douglas Fisher, Carol Rothenberg, and Nancy Frey
- (4) *Teaching the New Writing : Technology, Change, and Assessment in the 21st-Century Classroom*, edited by Anne Herrington, Kevin Hodgson, and Charles Moran

Field Experience:

This course has a required field experience component, which provides an invaluable way to connect the course content to what is going on in actual high school and middle school classrooms. You will need to have fifteen contact hours in a classroom. You must submit a signed form certifying that you completed your Field Experience in order to receive

credit. **I cannot give you a passing grade for the course if you do not complete your Field Experience.** When you participate in your field experience, be sure to take notes on anything that relates to what we are discussing in class. For example, we cover Essay Writing, focus your observations on teaching essays. I expect that you will be able to include your Field Experience observations in our class discussions. **Please visit <http://cehd.gmu.edu/teacher/fieldexperience/> for instructions on how to sign up for your field experience.**

List of Course Assignments and Due Dates

- (1) **Quizzes** (short answer). There will be a total of 5 quizzes and they will take place during Weeks 2-6 of the course (9/8 - 10/6). *20% of course grade.*

Grading Scale:

100	Answer accurately based on reading and appropriate example(s) are given.
87	Answer accurately based on reading but example(s) are inappropriate.
77	Answer may have some correct information but is not entirely based on reading.
0	Answer incorrect.
0	No answer given/absent for quiz.

Quizzes are given at the beginning of each class.. I drop the lowest quiz grade. Only one make up quiz is permitted. Students enrolled in EDCI 479 will receive questions on an undergraduate level. Students enrolled in EDCI 669 will receive questions on a graduate level.

- (2) **Reader Response Lesson Plan #1** (for advanced students; you choose grade level). Draft due in class on October 20/Final Copy due in class on October 27. *20% of course grade.*
- (3) **Demonstration of Reader Response Lesson Plan.** In small groups, you will teach one of the Reader Response lessons handed in on 10/27. You will receive an individual grade for your part in teaching the lesson. I will be assessing you on your presence in front of the class and your novice ability to hold a discussion about a work of literature. In class, Nov. 10-Dec. 1 (exact date of your turn TBD). *10% of course grade.*
- (4) **"Show What You Know"** activities (shared in class, from Oct. 20 through Nov. 3) and

" **Supporting Difficult Reading** " activities (shared in class, from Nov. 17-Dec. 8). I do not collect these activities; rather, they are a chance for you to share teaching ideas that you get from the readings with your peers and with me. I will not formally grade these activities; only if I notice that you consistently have little or nothing to share will I lower your course grade. I will let you know if you are in danger of a lowered grade. *10% of course grade.*

- (5) **Exploratory Essay Assignment.** You will design an exploratory-essay assignment. Due in class on November 24. *25 % of course grade*
- (6) **Reader Response Lesson Plan #2 (for heterogeneous class).** You will revise your Reader Response Lesson Plan #1 to accommodate a wider range of reading and language competencies. Due by e-mail attachment on December 15 by 7:10pm. *15% of course grade.*

Please note that I happy to answer questions about the assignments over e-mail or during an office appointment but that it will be difficult for me to accommodate requests to read and respond to assignment drafts. I will provide several examples of lesson plans to help you compose your own successfully, and I spend class time going over the requirements and expectations for each assignment.

****Late Assignment Policy****

I do not accept assignments more than 3 weekdays late (counting up to midnight of the third day). **Assignments are due in class.** Please e-mail late assignments to ahruby@gmu.edu as a Word .doc file (I cannot open .docx or Word Perfect files). For each day an assignment is late, I deduct 10 points.

Please Note that any exemplary Lesson Plans and Unit Plans that you submit for a grade will be made available to your classmates so they can benefit from the sharing of ideas. If at any time you do not want me to post one of your lesson plans or unit plans, please let me know.

GRADING SCALE

A+	97-100	B+	87-89	D	60-69
A	93-96	B	80-86	F	below

A- 90-92

C 70-79

Schedule of Readings/Assignments:

****** Readings are due for the class period under which they are listed. Always bring the night's readings with you to class. In some cases, I request that you bring an additional text for reference during a class activity. Look for such requests in bold.

September 1

No readings. Course Introduction

September 8 (Quiz)

- **Topics:** (1) Using the ThinkPairSquareShare discussion format; (2) Teaching literature using a Reader Response approach (relevancy of New Criticism and Literary Theory).
- **Read:** Chapters 1 and 8 in *Critical Encounters in High School English* (CEHE)

September 15 (Quiz) - Begin to search for poem or song for your Reader Response Lesson.

- **Topics:** (1) Using the Socratic Method; (2) Teaching literature using a Reader Response approach (the role of transactional theory and Envisionment).
- **Read:** the chapter by Louise Rosenblatt and the chapter by Judith Langer in your course packet.

September 22 (Quiz)

- **Topics:** (1) Using the Socratic Method; (2) Teaching literature using a Reader Response approach (the role of Feminist and Marxist literary theories).
- **Read:** Chapters 4 and 5 in CEHE.

September 29 (Quiz)

- **Topics:** (1) Using teacher-led discussions/key questions; (2) Teaching literature using a Reader Response approach (What in an Interpretive Community?)
- **Read:** the chapter by Stanley Fish in your course packet.

October 6 (Quiz)

- **Topics:** (1) Using fishbowl discussions; (2) Teaching literature using a Reader Response approach (the role of Postmodernism).
- **Read** Chapter 7 in CEHE.

October 13

No Class

October 20 ("Show What You Know" activity) - begin to search for article or book on food and dieting.

- **Due:** Draft of Reader Response Lesson Plan #1
- **Topic:** Teaching Writing
- **Read:** Chapters 1 and 8 in *Teaching the New Writing* (TNW)

October 27 ("Show What You Know" activity)

- **Due:** Final copy of Reader Response Lesson Plan #1
- **Topic:** Teaching Writing
- **Read:** Chapters 4 and 10 in TNW

November 3 (bring in article or book on food/dieting)

- **Topic:** Teaching Writing
- **Read:** Read the article you are bringing in on food/dieting. If you are bringing in a book, read at least one chapter.

* Indicates that two Demonstration Lesson Plans will take place during class. These lessons are presented by the students.

*November 10 ("Show What You Know" activity) - you should be collecting 4 short reading pieces for class Nov. 17-Dec. 8).

- **Topic:** Teaching Writing
- **Read:** Chapters 5 and 6 in TNW

*November 17 ("Supporting Difficult Reading" activity; bring in one of your four short reading pieces)

- **Topic:** Addressing the needs of inexperienced and struggling readers
- **Read:** TBA (I will provide two articles on helping struggling and inexperienced readers).

*November 24 ("Supporting Difficult Reading" activity; bring in one of your four short reading pieces)

- **Due:** Exploratory Essay Assignment
- **Topic:** ELL students
- **Read:** Chapters 1 and 2 in *Language Learners in the English Classroom* (LLEC)

*December 1 ("Supporting Difficult Reading" activity; bring in one of your four short reading pieces)

- **Topic:** ELL students
- **Read:** Chapters 3 and 4 in LLEC

December 8 ("Supporting Difficult Reading" activity; bring in one of your four short reading pieces)

- **Topic:** ELL students
- **Read :** Chapters 5 and 6 in LLEC

Your Reader Response Lesson Plan #2 is due December 15th, by e-mail attachment to ahruby@gmu.edu I must have the attachment by 7:10pm for it to be counted as on-time.