

EDCI 479: Advanced Methods of Teaching English in the Secondary School
Spring 2010
Tuesdays 4:30-7:10pm

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Catalog Description:

Continuation course in methods (See EDCI 469). Guides students in working effectively with national and local standards for teaching secondary English.

Course Objectives:

This class will follow a critical-inquiry format, meaning that the readings, discussions, and assignments will be guided by a set of essential questions that are aimed at helping you think and re-think approaches to teaching language arts. The “critical” part of the inquiry refers to thinking about reading and writing as social, cultural, and political pursuits that go far beyond easily defined skill sets. As such, we will need to discuss and come to conclusions about how to address the complexity of teaching reading and writing to young adults who come from diverse backgrounds and who have diverse expectations of schooling.

While the first methods course focused on unit planning, language study, and writing process approaches, this course focuses more closely on the teaching of literature and the role of essay writing in teaching literature. For the undergraduate section of this course, this means that students will examine literary interpretation and essay rhetoric from a practical perspective, but with an emphasis on learning key terms that can lead to a more theoretical understanding of the pertinent issues involved in teaching reading and writing to adolescents. The essential questions for our inquiry (both graduate and undergraduate) are as follows:

1. What does it mean to interpret a literary text in middle or high school? How can English teachers invite and work with a variety of perspectives when shaping literary interpretation?
2. What is an essay? What role does essay writing play in helping students to interpret literature texts?
3. What other modes of writing (especially those related to digital technology) can foster and shape literary interpretation?

4. How can English teachers differentiate reading and writing instruction for students (a) with various aptitudes for reading and (b) in various stages of English language acquisition?

The above questions relate to 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/>

NOTE: The lesson plans and essay assignment you design for this course will also relate to the Virginia SOL.

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-planning skills.

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:**

All students must abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions.

See <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code.

See

<http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12> for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/policy/newpolicy/1301gen.html>. Click on responsible Use of Computing Policy at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See <http://www2.gmu.edu/dpt/unilife/ods/> or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.

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.
- **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 # 6 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 the question, *what is an essay?* For class on Feb 23, please **bring in an example of an essay** from a newspaper, magazine or anthology. Online or print sources are both acceptable, but try to find an exemplar piece (thus, your source should be widely known and reputable). It is up to you to decide if the piece is an essay – that is, use your judgment. It will be more productive if we have a variety of samples across the class, so don't worry about finding a "correct" example. Instead, concern yourself with adding to our class discussion about the many dimensions of essay writing.

Required Course Texts

(1) *Critical Encounters in High School English, Second Edition* by Deborah Appleman*

* **make sure to buy the second edition.**

(2) *Language Learners in the Classroom* by Douglas Fisher, Carol Rothenberg, and Nancy Frey

(3) *Teaching the New Writing : Technology, Change, and Assessment in the 21st-Century Classroom*, edited by Anne Herrington, Kevin Hodgson, and Charles Moran

(4) *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank (Bantam Books, publisher). **Please also purchase (or set aside a section of) a notebook that you can use solely for capturing your reflections and interpretations as you read the novel. We will do these written reflections and interpretations during class, although you are more than welcome to start them or expand on them outside of class.**

(5) *Inquiry and the Literary Text: Constructing Discussions in the English Classroom* edited by Holden and Schmit.

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 4 quizzes and they will take place during Weeks 2-5 of the course (1/26 – 2/16). *20% of course grade.*

Quizzes are given at the beginning of each class. 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.

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.

- (2) **Reader Response Lesson Plan #1 (for advanced students; you choose grade level).** Draft due in class on Feb. 23/Final Copy due on March 2. *20% of course grade. Bring draft to class/submit final copy through e-mail attachment to ahruby@gmu.edu.*
- (3) **Demonstration of Reader Response Lesson Plan.** In small groups, you will teach one of the Reader Response lessons handed in on 3/2. 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. A rubric will be provided. The lessons will take place in class, 3/23-4/27) (exact date of your turn TBD). *10% of course grade.*
- (4) **“Show What You Know”** activities (shared in class, from Feb. 23-March 16) and **“Supporting Difficult Reading”** activities (shared in class, from March 30-April 27). 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 on April 13. *25 % of course grade. Submit this assignment by e-mail attachment to ahruby@gmu.edu*
- (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 May 4. 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). 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 60
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.

Blackboard/Class Handouts: By each Monday at 9am I will post any handouts you need for that Tuesday's class. Some will be PDF files and other will be Word files. Please download the handouts and bring them to class (in paper or electronic form).

You can access Blackboard through the web address **courses.gmu.edu** or through the link to Blackboard on the “Students” page (you get to this page by clicking on the “Students” tab at the top of the GMU homepage.) Use the same login and password that you use to access your gmU e-mail account.

January 19

No readings. Course Introduction:

Note: You will need to be reading *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl* as we study literary interpretation from January 19-February 16. We will be using the diary to explore how literary theory gets used in English classrooms. Please have the novel completed by class on March 2, when we will begin using it to study the connections between literary interpretation and essay writing.

January 26 (Quiz)

- **Topics:** (1) Using the ThinkPairSquareShare discussion format; (2) Chaos Theory in Literary Interpretation (2) Cultural Modeling in Literary Interpretation
- **Read:** Chapters 1, 3, and 5 in *Inquiry and the Literary Text* (ILT). Read at least 50 pages in *Anne Frank*.

February 2 (Quiz) – Begin to search for poem or song for your Reader Response Lesson.

- **Topics:** (1) Using the Fishbowl discussion format; (2) Teaching literature using a Reader Response approach (the role of transactional theory, Envisionment, and New Criticism)
- **Read:** Chapters 13 and 14 in ILT. Read at least 50 pages in *Anne Frank*.

February 9 (Quiz) Begin to look for essay sample to bring to class on Feb. 23

- **Topics:** (1) Using the Socratic Method; (2) Critical Theory/Reader Response
- **Read:** Chapters 4 and 5 in *Critical Encounters in High School English* (CEHE). Read at least 50 pages in *Anne Frank*.

February 16 (Quiz)

- **Topics:** (1) Critical Theory /Reader Response (2) Putting it all together – how do theories of reader response relate to one another?
- **Read:** Chapters 6 and 7 in CEHE. Read at least 50 pages in *Anne Frank*.

February 23 (“Show What You Know” activity). Bring a sample of a published essay to class.

- **Due:** Draft of Reading Response Lesson Plan # 1 (bring a copy to class)
- **Topic:** What is an essay?
- **Read:** Chapters 1 and 8 in *Teaching the New Writing* (TNW). Read at least 50 pages in *Anne Frank*.

March 2 (“Show What You Know” activity)

- **Due:** Final copy of Reader Response Lesson Plan #1 (submit as an e-mail attachment).
- **Topic:** Thesis/Support Essays
- **Read:** Chapters 4 and 10 in TNW

March 16 (“Show What You Know” activity) – you should be collecting 4 short reading pieces for class March 30-April 27).

- **Topic:** Exploratory Essays
- **Read:** Chapters 5 and 6 in TNW

***Indicates that two Demonstration Lesson Plans will take place during class. These lessons are presented by you and your classmates. You will be placed in a group of 2-3 students to present one of the lessons.**

***March 23**

- Topic: Designing an Exploratory Essay Assignment
- Read: No Reading

***March 30 (“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).

April 6: No Class

***April 13 (“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)

***April 20 (“Supporting Difficult Reading” activity; bring in one of your four short reading pieces)**

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

***April 27 (“Supporting Difficult Reading” activity; bring in one of your four short reading pieces)**

- **Topic:** ELL students
- **Read :** Chapters 5 and 6 in LLEC
- **Revised Reader Response Lesson Plan Due May 4 by e-mail attachment to ahruby@gmu.edu**