TEACH_ED 356 – METHODS AND TECHNIQUES IN ENGLISH
Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy
Spring Quarter 2004

Wednesday 4:30-7:00 p.m., ten sessions beginning March 31, G01 Annenberg
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Teachers are those who use themselves as bridges, Over which they invite their students to cross; Then having facilitated their crossing, joyfully collapse, Encouraging them to create bridges of their own.
--Nikos Kazantzakis

Course Description

This course explores the art and the craft of teaching the English/language arts in middle and high school across the range of grade and ability levels. Directed toward unit design, lesson construction, instructional strategies, and the assessment of student learning, our work blends subject matter with pedagogical theory. Several questions will guide our inquiries: Why am I doing this? What instructional purpose is being served? Is it worthwhile? What will I do to engage my students in the journey? How will I know that my students have learned? In short, in what ways will my students’ learning have been enhanced from the time they walk into my classroom to the time they walk out?

Using field observations, research, technology, your personal experience as students, and your study of literature and language, you will employ your own resourcefulness to develop unit and lesson plans as well as instructional materials including assessments and rubrics for seminar discussion and critique. A primary resource will be your collegiality as peers. Performing as both teachers and students, you will have substantial practice in teaching mini-lessons to one another. Much of your learning will result from doing and reflecting, with your peers and instructor serving as friendly coaches and critics.

Overall, by the end of the quarter, you will have expanded your understanding of what it means to be an English teacher and of the qualities of successful English classrooms and how to achieve those qualities.

The course provides preparation for the Illinois State certification test as well as for the internship/student teaching phase of teacher education.
Guiding Principles

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: The guiding principle of the School of Education and Social Policy lies in our vision of learning, learners, and teaching as interdependent and ever changing. We understand that learning takes place in all stages of life and in many different settings, not only in schools. We view increasing diversity in the world as a rich resource for authentic learning. Ours is a vision firmly grounded in social practice, and we actively connect pedagogical theory to everyday experience in the classroom and beyond. Through research and reflection, we seek to understand the nature of learning communities and how innovations in pedagogy, technology, and social policy can improve our institutions and our lives. See attachment.

ISBE STANDARDS AND GOALS: Whenever you turn in a word-processed Lesson Plan, Individual Instructional Material, or the Unit Plan, please specify the applicable Learning Goals and Standards #1-5 in English. You will need to type the appropriate standard(s) and/or goal(s) and standard(s) written out in full. Indicate the Arabic number and the subdivision A, B, C, D. Please make copies of these Goals and Standards and bring them to class with you.

Required Texts


Note: These texts provide a foundation for your professional library as English/language arts teachers. While we will not read all sections of every text in this quarter, they are resources for the domains of the language arts and will serve you well in the future. Texts are available at Norris Bookstore.
Course Objectives

As a result of completing the course, students will

- Become familiar with the elements that comprise effective curriculum in English/language arts for grades 6-12. CF 1.3, 3.1*

- Become familiar with the NU Conceptual Framework and the ISBE Goals and Standards and evaluate their curriculum design, teaching practices, and choice of instructional materials in the context of the CF and the goals and standards. CF 3.1

- Design coherent instruction that is based on instructional goals derived from knowledge of students, knowledge of content and pedagogy, and knowledge of resources including technology. CF 1.1-1.5

- Design assessments, evaluation instruments, and rubrics that reflect instructional goals and record student growth. CF 1.1-1.5

- Create a culture for learning based on the central importance of the engaged learner and active learning, as well as multiple intelligences and diverse learning styles. CF 1.1, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2

- Articulate the role of critical thinking as evidenced in reading, writing, and oral language in the design of unit and lesson plans. CF 1.1-1.5, 3.1

- Practice habits of inquiry, reflection, self-evaluation, and revision in constructing effective learning environments. CF 1.2, 1.3, 3.1

- Become familiar with professional practices that extend beyond the classroom. CF 3.2

- Practice collaboration as a community of learners whose goals and objectives will be successfully achieved through cooperation. CF 1.3

*keyed to Northwestern University’s Conceptual Framework

Course Policies, Practices, Requirements

1. **Reading:** In addition to weekly reading assignments, you will read the literature (e.g., short stories, drama, poetry) that forms the basis for your lesson planning. If you do not already own copies of the relevant titles,
texts are readily available in most high school and university libraries and in Norris and Evanston bookstores.

2. **Written Work:** Students in this course will complete several types of written assignments including the following: **Talking Points** based on weekly reading, **Individual Instructional Materials** (e.g., an outline for a class discussion; instructions for various reading and writing activities such as a research paper, a project, an essay, or an oral interview; a rubric for evaluation of student work; a writing prompt), **Mini-teaching Lesson Plans,** and a 3-4 week **Unit Plan.** Specific explanations and directions will be provided for each type of assignment. See Course Outline for current due dates and other due dates TBD, based on the needs and interests of the class. Additional research and writing experiences will be assigned as appropriate. All written assignments should be word-processed and demonstrate appropriate grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction, and attention to other aspects of standard composition. When relevant, development of a thesis fully supported and articulated in a cohesive, coherent fashion will be required. **Also required is relevant bibliographic documentation.** Weekly written work will be critiqued in writing by the instructor. Students will also be expected to critique each other’s work on a selected basis. Please expect that your work may be shared with the entire group, and **please maintain a file of all work you complete in this class.** All assignments are potential documents for your digital portfolios.

3. **Oral Work:** Oral participation, demonstration, presentation, dialogue, discussion, and practice teaching are fundamental to the course and fundamental to becoming a leader in the field. A number of written assignments will include an oral component.

4. **Attendance:** Attendance is required for the ten sessions we meet and will count toward your final grade. Because of the brevity of the term, your presence at each meeting is essential to your success in achieving readiness to teach. Don’t we know -- *The readiness is all!* (Hamlet) If you encounter an extreme circumstance of illness or emergency, please call my number provided and leave word. It is your responsibility to contact me for any assignments you miss in such a situation. In any case, any excused work will be due within one week.

5. **Evaluation and Grades:** Course grades will be based upon 1. your regular attendance and constructive participation as a member of the class; 2. weekly reading and written assignments, including the talking points and teaching materials you have developed (“individual instructional materials”); 3. mini-teaching lessons – both written lesson plans and oral demonstrations /practice teaching; 4. the culminating unit plan; 5. self-evaluation: reporting level of participation, engagement, preparation,
achievement, growth. We will develop a rubric for this evaluation. Assignments will receive a point value that will be computed in arriving at the final grade. You will receive a separate handout articulating these point values. The final unit plan will count for 30-40% of the grade, and all other components will be 60-70% of the grade. Grading scale: A 90-100, B 89-80, C 79-70, below 69 unacceptable. I am under no obligation to accept and grade late work.

Summary: Students are expected to contribute to the community of learners by attending class each week; reading assigned materials and completing related written homework; being prepared emotionally, physically, and intellectually; listening intently to one another; demonstrating professional grace and curiosity; formulating questions; leading discussions; contributing to class decision-making; displaying initiative and energy; and participating in the daily dialogue. You will find that being superbly well-organized is your best friend, and that your own resourcefulness and experience are as essential to your success as milk to a baby. You are encouraged to bring your enthusiasm and your sense of humor to class. You can expect the same of me.

Course Outline

Session #1, March 31: Becoming an English Teacher

“Practice Makes Less Imperfect”

- Practice cardiology
- Complete student inventory (interests, readiness, needs)
- Review class policies, practices, and requirements
- Distribute and discuss Roundtable Talking Points instructions
- Distribute and discuss Mini-teaching Lesson Plan formats and rubrics (for written Lesson Plan, written Individual Instructional Material [IIM], oral Mini-teaching, Oral Demonstration)
- Develop topics for Individual Instructional Material list
- Discuss calendar and due dates TBD
- Develop Oral Interview format and questions
- Discuss use of Beloved and other literature genres
- Review CF, and Goals and Standards; practice application
- Establish connections to the Practicum Site and the Practicum
- Clarify assignments for Session #2

“Only connect.” E. M. Forester
**Session #2, April 7: Teaching Short Fiction**

**Assignments due April 7**

*Roundtable Talking Points*

*Readings:* Christenbury, pp. 65-70, chs. 5, 9 (45 pages)  
Wilhelm, chs. 2-5 (117 pages)

*Literature:* Read the short story, TBD

*Lesson Plan:* Based upon a selected short story, write a 1-2 page Lesson Plan.

*Discussion:* Based on your short story Lesson Plan

**Session #3, April 14: Teaching Writing**

**Assignments due April 14**

*Roundtable Talking Points*

*Readings:* Christenbury, chs. 4, 8 (49 pages)  
Atwell, chs. 1-9 (324 pages)

*Individual Instructional Material:* Design a Writing Assignment (1-2 pages; provide copies for the class). See handout for instructions.

*Field Work/Oral Interview:* Interview your mentor teacher or another faculty member on the topic of teaching writing. Bring to class your written notes with word-processed interview questions attached.

*Discussion:* Writing assignments and oral interviews. As a class modeling an English faculty curriculum team, we will choose one specific element of composition and build a lesson around it. Your homework assignment will be to choose one specific element of composition and build a lesson plan (1-2 pages) around it for demonstration at Session #4. You are encouraged to use the writing assignment you created as the basis for this lesson.
Session #4, April 21: Teaching Grammar and Language

Assignments due April 21

Lesson Plan/Mini-teaching: Teach a portion of your written lesson plan on one aspect of writing instruction (15-20 minutes). Bring relevant handouts for the class.

Roundtable Talking Points

Readings: Weaver, Skim the book and focus on chs. 5 & 6 (81 pages)
           Christenbury, ch. 7 (28 pages)

Field Work/Oral Interview: Try to observe the teaching of grammar and language (usage, spelling, vocabulary) at your field site. If observation is not possible, then arrange to have a conversation with your mentor or another teacher about the teaching of grammar. Bring to class your written notes with word-processed interview questions attached. Be sure to reference class readings in your interview.

Discussion: The oral interview re. grammar and usage.

IIM: Prepare an IIM (or a lesson plan if you prefer) on any aspect of grammar for a freshman or middle school class of general ability level. Avoid wholesale borrowing from workbooks or online. Make this the grammar lesson you wish you had had in school.

Discussion: A. Based on your IIM (or lesson plan) on grammar. B. As a class, we will identify the elements of grammar/punctuation/usage that you would like to review.

ALTERNATIVE TOPIC: THE RESEARCH PAPER

Session #5, April 28: Teaching the Novel

Assignments due April 28

Roundtable Talking Points

Readings: Christenbury, ch. 6 (39 pages)
           Wilhelm, chs. 6, 7, 8 (120 pages)

Literature: Beloved (You should have completed reading the novel by this session)
            Be prepared to propose a novel that you would like to use in your teaching.
Discussion: On what basis do we make our curricular choices? What are our goals and objectives?

Individual Instructional Material: Prepare a 1-page written IIM for introducing the novel to your class.

Mini-teaching: Teach 15-20 minutes of your IIM. Be sure to bring copies of relevant handouts.

Discussion: As part of a curriculum team preparing a unit on Beloved, each team member will choose one aspect of the unit to develop as a lesson plan (2 pages) including one Individual Instructional Material (1 page), part of which will be taught in Session #6.

Reminder: Choose a piece or pieces of non-fiction for next week.

Session #6, May 5: Teaching Non-Fiction

Assignments due May 5

Lesson Plan/IIM: Written on one aspect of Beloved.

Mini-teaching: Choose 15-20 minutes of your lesson plan/IIM to teach.

Roundtable Talking Points

Readings: Atwell, ch. 11, 14 (51 pages)
Harmin, ch. 12-14 (27 pages)

Field Work/Discussion: Consult the curriculum at your field site. Which non-fiction titles are taught in the English curriculum? Take notes for discussion. Check in your department and/or school for official statements on academic honesty. Bring copies to class along with any information you have gained about how teachers handle plagiarism.

Research: Using all sections of your favorite newspapers and magazines, make a curriculum list of non-fiction forms of writing that can serve as models for student reading and writing. Make notes about how you might use them.

Discussion: As an English faculty curriculum team, we will take any piece of non-fiction and create a study guide for use in the classroom. Be sure to bring relevant handouts to class.
Session #7, May 12: Teaching Poetry/Using Pop Culture/Media Literacy

Assignments due May 12

Roundtable Talking Points

Readings: Christenbury, ch. 10 (14 pages)
Harmin, chs. 1, 3-5, 10 (59 pages)

Research &Discussion: A. Using your mentor teacher; on-line resources; your field site textbooks, curriculum guides, and resources; and the English Journal, bring to class three examples of lesson plans and/or unit plans for the teaching of poetry. B. Bring one or more of your personal favorite poems to class. How might you use it/them in the classroom? (Copies, please, for the class.)

IIM &Discussion: Choose a work from popular culture (film, music, video, interactive electronic media) and create an IIM that includes a rationale for use in the English curriculum.

Guest Speaker

Reminder: Introduction and discussion of unit plan.

Session #8, May 19: Teaching Drama

Assignments due May 19

Roundtable Talking Points

Readings: TBD

Literature: You should have completed your reading of a Shakespeare play chosen by the class.
A modern contemporary play of your choice (one you have read).

Lesson Plan and Mini-teaching: Prepare a written lesson plan and teach 15-20 minutes (your choice of drama).

Unit Plan draft and discussion.

Session #9, Field Trip and Assignments TBD

Session #10, June 9: Symposium

Assessment: Presentation and Mini-teaching of Unit Plan; Evaluation.