

## Methods of Secondary Literacy Instruction

### Educational Studies 379 • Winter 2008

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T,Th 1:15-3:00, Sayles 253  
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Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursdays  
(use signup sheet on office door)  
Tuesday, Thursdays 3:00-4:00  
Wednesday 10:00-12:00  
and by appointment

**Course Description** This course is situated at the nexus of theory and practice, of vision and reality, of teaching and learning. It will turn your knowledge of literature, language and writing into pedagogical content knowledge that will mark your transformation from student to teacher. Welcome!

This course has four primary purposes:

- 1) To provide an opportunity to articulate your vision of yourself as a secondary language arts teacher and to consider the implications of that vision
- 2) To engage you in developing instructional strategies that will help you animate that vision.
- 3) To help prepare you for your student teaching experience by assisting you in finding a student teaching placement
- 4) To introduce you to some general pedagogical considerations that cut across all subject matters

This course will introduce you to some of the skills and experiences that are requisite for successful secondary language arts teaching. We will explore methodologies and issues surrounding the teaching of literature, language, and composition in secondary schools.

**Course Format** The class meetings will include presentations or mini-lectures, discussion, activities, guest teachers, and opportunities to observe a variety of secondary language arts classrooms. By the third week of class, two to three hours per week will be devoted to observation and participation in secondary language arts classes. For a variety of pragmatic reasons, you will be working primarily in Michelle Sonnega's or Ellen Mucha's classroom at Northfield High School. During these sessions, you should be observing an accomplished teacher in practice, relating the theories we study to current practice, helping students in a variety of ways and teaching at least one classroom period length lesson.

You will also be visiting at least two other schools, which we will arrange according to your schedules. These visits are also designed to help you find your student teaching placement, which should be resolved by the end of this term.

Depending on your schedule and availability, we will also occasionally meet for lunch and meet at my Northfield House. ☺

**Course Moodle Site:** We will be using Carleton's course management system Moodle (<https://moodle.carleton.edu>). We will be using the site to list readings and assignments, to post blogs, and to hand in and return assignments.

**Course Objectives** The Standards of Effective Practice for Teachers have been adapted for inclusion in this course:

1. The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.
2. The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.
3. The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.
4. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
5. The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
6. The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
7. The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.
8. The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social and physical development of the learner.
9. The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
10. The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

**Course Readings** The following texts have been selected for use in the course and are available in the bookstore. A complete set of books is also available on reserve in the curriculum library.

**Required:**

D. Appleman-*Critical Encounters in High School English* (provided)  
N. Atwell - *In the Middle*  
Beach, Appleman, Hynds, Wilhelm *Teaching Literature to Adolescents*  
K. Beers – *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do*  
J. Burke – *The English Teacher's Companion*  
L. Christensen – *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up*  
Z.N. Hurston – *Their Eyes Were Watching God*  
L. King – *Hear My Voice*  
B. Pirie – *Reshaping High School English*  
M. Twain – *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*  
J. Williams – *Preparing to Teach Writing*

(Additional readings will be given as handouts.)

### Course Requirements

1. Attend class, keep up with the reading, and contribute regularly to our discussions.	10%
2. Keep a journal of your thoughts about teaching in general and about teaching in your particular discipline. Your journal should become a collection of your individual reflections on teaching as well as a place to address specific questions that arise from the readings and class discussions. Each week, I will pose specific questions that should be addressed in your journal. The journal will be collected (or can be turned in on Moodle). <b>Feb 5 and Mar 7</b>	20%
3. Create a literacy autobiography / timeline <b>Jan 8</b>	10%
4. Read an adolescent novel, participate in a literature circle book discussion, and write a reader / teacher response to that novel Write a reader / teacher response to an adolescent novel <b>Feb 7</b>	15%
5. Teach one one-hour mini-lesson in a regular secondary classroom during weeks 7-10. You will arrange the time with the classroom teacher. You need to submit the lesson plan and a brief report of your teaching episode. <b>To be arranged.</b>	20%
6. A teaching portfolio, which will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a rationale or statement of philosophy (5%) for teaching English / Language Arts</li> <li>• Your lesson plan listed in #5</li> <li>• a final ten-day unit plan (15%)</li> <li>• a self-assessment of your current strengths and weaknesses as a teacher (5%)</li> </ul> <p>Due date: <b>Mar 12</b></p>	25%

## Calendar\*

### Methods of Secondary Literacy Instruction

#### Topic 1

##### Course introduction

**Defining the language arts**

**Toward a vision of ourselves as teachers**

Thu, Jan 3

Tue, Jan 8

**First draft of Rationale due, Timeline due**

*In the Middle, Reshaping High School English, Reading, Writing, and Rising Up*

#### Topic 2

**Characteristics of adolescent language learners**

Thu, Jan 10

Tue, Jan 15

*In the Middle*

#### Topic 3

**Characteristics of contemporary high school English classrooms**

Thu, Jan 17

Tue, Jan 22

Visits to selected secondary classrooms

*In the Middle, Reading, Writing, and Rising Up*

#### Topic 4

**Approaches to the teaching of literature**

**Teaching short stories and novels**

**Literary theory in the high school classroom**

Thu, Jan 24

Tue, Jan 29

Thu, Jan 31

*Hear My Voice, Critical Encounters, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Their Eyes Were Watching God, Reshaping High School English, Teaching Literature to Adolescents*

#### Topic 5

**Teaching reading**

**Incorporating adolescent literature**

Feb 2-4

Tue, Feb 5

Thu, Feb 7

**Mid-Term Break**

**Journals due**

**Adolescent novel report due**

*When Kids Can't Read*

#### Topic 6

**Incorporating poetry**

Tue, Feb 12

Thu, Feb 14

*Hear My Voice, Rainbow Poetry Packet, Critical Encounters, Reading Writing, and Rising Up, Teaching Literature to Adolescents*

#### Topic 7

**Approaches to teaching and assessing writing**

Tue, Feb 19

Thu, Feb 21

Tue, Feb 26

Thu, Feb 28

*In The Middle, Preparing To Teach Writing, Reading, Writing, and Rising Up, Reshaping High School English, Teaching Literature to Adolescents*

**Topic 8**  
**Technology in the language arts classroom**  
Tue, Mar 4  
*The English Teacher's Companion*

**Topic 9**  
**Becoming an English teacher**  
**Final considerations**  
Thu, Mar 6  
Wed, Mar 12, 8:30-11:00  
*In the Middle, When Kids Can't Read, Reading, Writing, and Rising Up, On the Brink, Reshaping High School English*

**Journals due**  
**Final Session, Brunch and Presentation of portfolios**

\* To ensure maximum flexibility, reading lists will be distributed by topic.