

The Teaching of English in Secondary Schools

EDCI 42200
Meets in HEAV 129
MWF 1:30-2:20
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Course Description

COURSE OVERVIEW

EDCI 422 is the “capstone” methods course for English Education majors. Three overarching and interrelated strands organize it: unit design, critical theory, and a field experience. We will work together this semester to synthesize old and new knowledge, analyze different methods and theories, and develop new understandings and perspectives. Our goal throughout is to ask questions and consider answers: What does it mean to be an English teacher? How does theory work in a high school classroom? Why should teachers care about research? What teaching methods work best with adolescents? How does a teacher design a year’s worth of curriculum – or find wiggle room for a sense of autonomy within a prescribed curriculum? How do teachers attend to the affective as well as the cognitive domain – that is, how do we recognize, and perhaps capitalize on, the reality that there are bodies as well as minds in the classroom? We are not trying to isolate “the answer” or “the method” – alas, there is no such thing – rather, we are exploring the complexities of the English classroom to better understand our practice and our selves as secondary English teachers.

To that end, we will explore the integration of various areas of the English language arts curriculum: literature, language, writing, grammar and media. Through class discussion, course readings and collaborative projects, we will address multiple methods of instruction and assessment. We will engage in research, a meaningful piece of practice and growth, through individual inquiry and reflection. Last but not least, we will extend our learning through a practicum component in local high school English classrooms.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To explore instructional, philosophical and student diversity in the secondary English classroom
- To read and consider the implementation of a variety of texts through the critical-theoretical lenses of race, class, and gender
- To develop units of instruction that integrate the various areas of the ELA curriculum – first with novels used in the course and then with literature likely to be used in student teaching and beyond
- To practice delivering instruction in a high school classroom
- To conduct an individual action research project

Required Reading

Text

- Smagorinsky, P. (2008). *Teaching English by design: How to create and carry out instructional units*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

YA Novels

- Allison, D. (1992). *Bastard out of Carolina*. New York: Plume/Penguin.
- Anderson, L. H. (1999). *Speak*. New York: Penguin Putnam.
- Johnson, A. (2003). *The first part last*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Letts, B. (1995). *Where the heart is*. New York: Warner Books.
- Lynch, C. (2005). *Inexcusable*. New York: Atheneum Books.
- Myers, W. D. (1999). *Monster*. New York: HarperCollins.

Articles, Book Chapters, & Short Stories (available on Blackboard)

- Altschul, A. F. (2007). A new kind of gravity. In C. D'Ambrosio, U. K. Le Guin, & L. Tuck (Eds.), *The O'Henry prize stories 2007: The best stories of the year* (pp. 224-243). New York: Anchor Books.
- Baker, J. (2002). Trilingualism. In L. Delpit & J. K. Dowdy (Eds.), *The skin that we speak: Thoughts on language and culture in the classroom* (pp. 49-61). New York: New Press.
- Benjamin, B. & Irwin-DiVitis, L. (1998). Censoring girls' choices: Continued gender bias in English language arts classrooms. *English Journal*, 8 (2), 64-71.
- Bickmore, S. (2008). It is inexcusable to deny *Inexcusable* a place in the classroom. *The ALAN Review*, Winter, 15-33.
- Collier, E. W. (n.d.) Marigolds. Retrieved Dec. 28, 2008, from <http://sphstigers.org/ourpages/users/jasher/Bootcamp/Marigolds.pdf>
- Delpit, L. (2002). No kinda sense . In L. Delpit & J. K. Dowdy (Eds.), *The skin that we speak: Thoughts on language and culture in the classroom* (pp. 31-47). New York: New Press.
- Hartman, P. (2006). "Loud on the inside": Working-class girls, gender, and literacy. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 41(1), 82-117.
- Kirkland, D. (2008). "The rose that grew from concrete": Postmodern blackness and new English education. *English Journal*, 97(5), 69-75.
- McIntosh, P. (1988). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. Retrieved Dec. 29, 2008, from <http://www.nymbp.org/reference/WhitePrivilege.pdf>
- O'Donnell-Allen, C., & Smagorinsky, P. (1999). Revising Ophelia: Rethinking issues of gender and power in schools. *English Journal*, 88(3), 35-42.
- Pedagogical paradigms handout
- Purcell-Gates, V. (2002). "...As soon as she opened her mouth!": Issues of language, literacy, and power. In L. Delpit & J. K. Dowdy (Eds.), *The skin that we speak: Thoughts on language and culture in the classroom* (pp. 121-144). New York: New Press.
- RTE manuscript. The significance of social class in literary response and instruction: "What they actually mean by 'white trash.'" Forthcoming in *Research in the Teaching of English*.
- Smith, M. W., & Wilhelm, J. D. (2006). Lessons from *Chevys*. In *Going with the flow: How to engage boys (and girls) in their literacy learning* (pp. 1-16). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Spandel, V. (2006). In defense of rubrics. *English Journal*, 96(1), 19-22.
- White, B. (1995). Effects of autobiographical writing before reading on students' responses to short stories. *Journal of Educational Research*, 88(3), 173-185.
- White, B. & Johnson, T. S. (2001). We really do mean it: Implementing language arts standard #3 with opinionnaires. *The Clearinghouse: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues, and Ideas*, 74(3), 119-123.
- Wilson, M. (2007). Why I won't be using rubrics to respond to students' writing. *English Journal*, 96(4), 62-64.

Course Requirements

1. **Attendance.** Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed to make up for up to two excused absences by completing a mutually-agreeable assignment that will take you about the same amount of time as attending a class session. Any additional absences will result in an automatic reduction of your final grade by ½ letter per absence. Late arrivals are a pet peeve of mine; each tardy will result in a one-point deduction. Anyone who has attended all our sessions *on time* will receive five points added to her/his total at the end of the term.
2. **Literature Circles Journal and Reflection.** You will participate in literature circle discussions over six young adult novels – roughly one per two weeks. All of them raise issues related to race, class, and gender, but I am pairing them according to their main focus: *Speak* and *Inexcusable* on gender, *Monster* and *The First Part Last* on race, and *Trash* and *Where the Heart Is* on class. You will discuss these texts in small groups of 3-4 in whatever way(s) you find most efficacious outside of class, though you will also do some related activities during some class sessions. If you are unfamiliar with the concept of literature circles, I recommend that you read Daniels, H. (2002). *Literature circles: Voice and choice in book clubs and reading groups* (2nd ed.). Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers. As you are reading you will keep a double-entry journal of your ongoing questions/personal responses/critiques/connections (see page 6 for example), which you will turn in when your group has completed each set of two texts (10 points each set). Each set must incorporate reflections on each of the articles and/or book chapters and videos associated with the set for full credit. Your final assessment for this experience will take the form of a 4-6 page paper (or alternative project) in which you will analyze your literature circles, describing your group's dynamic and discussing whether and how you might incorporate lit circles and the novels you've read in your future classrooms. 20 points.
3. **Conceptual Unit of Instruction.** During this course you will learn how to create a unit of instruction, and your final assessment reflects that: You will produce a four- to six-week unit that you could ultimately use in your own classrooms. I encourage you to work in small groups (3 is good; 4 is too unwieldy), not only to share the burden of the workload but to capitalize on the benefits of collaboration for what is likely to be a new experience for you. As you will be creating this unit from scratch, using texts that not part of this course, it would be most beneficial for you to work with colleagues in your anticipated subject area/grade level. Your unit will include five parts: 1) a description of the context and rationale for the concept and texts you are using; 2) introductory activities; 3) a list of key concepts/discussion questions to be addressed during the unit; 4) assessments and rubrics; and 5) a calendar that outlines your plans and illustrates how you'll "get through" the material. 50 points. **This unit plan will be the Gate C artifact for English Education majors. Therefore, it must be uploaded to the Purdue electronic portfolio (Task Stream) by the designated date to receive credit for the assignment and also to pass the course.**

4. **Conceptual Unit Segments.** In small groups of two or three, you will practice creating the four main parts of the conceptual unit using the YA novel you're currently reading as if it were the principal novel you were teaching. These may or may not be the same groups as your final unit or lit circles. You'll get a job sheet for each part well in advance of its due date, but briefly, they are as follows. 10 points for each segment:
 - *Rationale* will include a description of the context for the class (grade/ability level, demographics, background information of the school and curriculum) and a rationale for teaching *Speak* and/or *Inexcusable* as well as your particular approach to it.
 - *Discussion Questions/Key Concepts* will include a set of five overarching concepts and a set of 20 discussion questions (3 each of Hillocks' authentic question types plus 8 that may or may not fit his categories) spanning the length of *Monster*.
 - *Assessments/Rubrics* will include at least one ongoing assessment (e.g., response journals, lit circle products) and two final assessments – one conventional (e.g., test or thematic essay) and one project-based – for any one or two of the four gender and race books. You'll include a rubric for each assessment.
 - *Introductory Activities* will include at least two prereading activities for *Bastard out of Carolina*.

5. **Field Experience-Teaching.** You will be assigned a high school teacher by the third week of class with whom to work for 20 clock hours over the course of the semester. You may organize your time as you and your mentor teacher see fit; you must, however, keep an accurate record of your hours, validated by your mentor, to submit with the teaching project at the end of the semester. This experience will provide you with an intensive, extended classroom practicum prior to student teaching. During the experience you are required to teach a series of 2-3 lessons or mini-lessons in the field placement (or regular in-depth tutoring experience if teaching lessons is not possible). These lessons will be created and taught under the supervision of your mentor teacher. You will turn in your lesson plans and a 2-3 page reflection on the experience. 25 points.

6. **Field Experience-Research.** In addition to observing and teaching, you will conduct and write up an action research project investigating a classroom issue or pedagogical strategy as part of your field experience. These projects will be small in scope due to the length of the field experience. However, the projects may include interviews with students, the collection of student work, the distribution of a survey, or other means of collecting information. Keep in mind issues of consent and confidentiality. Ideally, the mentor teachers will work collaboratively with you when selecting a "question" or issue for their research. I would like the results to be useful both for you *and* the mentor teachers! Remember that the purpose of action research is not to criticize the mentor teacher. Steer clear of projects or questions which might result in "teacher bashing" or uncomfortable interactions with mentor teachers. A research proposal outlining your plan and including a list of five works you plan to consult for your lit review will be due on 2/20 (5 points). Final project is 20 points.

7. **Final Exam.** You will have an oral final exam in which you will reflect on what you've learned in this course. 10 points.

Assessment

Lit circle journals = 30 points (10 points per segment on gender, race, and class)

Lit circle reflection = 20 points

Conceptual unit segments = 40 points (10 points each segment)

Conceptual unit = 50 points

Field experience teaching project = 25 points

Field experience research project = 25 points (5 for proposal; 20 for project)

Final exam = 10 points

Total = 200 points, to be converted to a percentage for your final grade:

93-100 = A	80-82 = B-
90-92 = A-	77-79 = C+
87-89 = B+	73-76 = C
83-86 = B	70-72 = C-

Late work policy: 10% deduction per day to a maximum of ½ credit. No late work accepted after 4/20.

Miscellaneous Statements

EMERGENCY STATEMENT

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. You can get information about changes in *this* course by checking on Blackboard for announcements, emailing me, or calling me.

ADAPTIVE PROGRAMS STATEMENT

Students with disabilities must be registered with Adaptive Programs in the Office of the Dean of Students before classroom accommodations can be provided. If you are eligible for academic accommodations because you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please schedule an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your needs.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY STATEMENT

Purdue prohibits "dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty." [Part 5, Section III-B-2-a, [University Regulations](#)] Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated that "the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest." [University Senate Document 72-18, December 15, 1972]

Lit circle journal starters:

"I was confused by ____"

"I wonder whether ____"

"I liked/hated/was disappointed/amused etc. by the part where ____ because ____"

" ____ reminded me of a time when ____"

"I can (or can't) relate to ____ because ____"

"This passage (include it) moved me because ____"

"In this part (include or paraphrase it) I think the author is trying to say ____ about ____"

"I would (or wouldn't) use this in the classroom because ____"

"I might include/teach this text in a unit on/in conjunction with ____ because ____"

"The article ____ made me think differently about using ____ because ____"

Anderson, L. H. (1999). *Speak*. New York: Penguin Putnam.

My reactions while reading	Follow-up
<p>Before I read this book I was skeptical about young adult literature. I thought the genre had its place in schools to get reluctant readers more interested in works they could relate to (as opposed to the dead-white-guy "classics" that are the usual school fare), but I found much of it, particularly series books marketed to teenage girls like "Baby-sitters' Club" or "Sweet Valley High," to be poorly-written and insipid at best and damaging to girls' identity development at worst. But right from the first page <i>Speak</i> had me hooked. Its style and form is clever and unusually sophisticated for a YA book, with its marking-period organization, flashbacks, symbolism, and so forth. This book is as worthy of study as a "classic" and it's appealing to young people today because it deals with contemporary issues.</p>	<p>Right. I wish we'd read something like this instead of—I can't even remember the novels I had to read when I was Melinda's age; maybe <u>Great Expectations</u> and <u>Huck Finn</u>? It certainly would have made more of an impression on me, perhaps even helped me deal with some similarly ugly stuff in high school. And I still appreciate the book as an adult...kind of like how <u>The Simpsons</u> and <u>South Park</u> *appear* to be geared toward kids, and yet they obviously appeal to a mature audience, too. (Tara's alter ego)</p>
<p>Melinda: I love her as a protagonist. Her wry, acerbic wit, her dark sense of humor...I <i>get</i> her, having had more than my share of ostracism and isolation growing up. But it's a little uncomfortable getting inside her head because I know she's going to take me to a depressing place as she relives and processes a painful memory.</p>	<p>I see what you're saying, but she's a little *too* dark for my taste. I like to read for pleasure, to escape to a place that's more interesting or happier than my reality—and this book just gets me down. I hope she doesn't let her depression get the best of her. (hypothetical person)</p>
<p>A chief concern students raise about using <i>Speak</i> in the classroom is whether boys will read it/hate it. But as Benjamin & Irwin-Divitis point out, most of the curriculum is tailored to boys, written from the perspective of white males – girls have few if any opportunities to see themselves, much less empowered versions of themselves, characterized in the canon. Even so, I pair it with <i>Inexcusable</i> in part to address this concern.</p>	<p>Can you have it both ways—include texts that appeal to both boys and girls, or does one always have to be sacrificed? And what about appealing to racial and sexual differences as well...you can't possibly please everybody, right? Or if you try to, does it just amount to a superficial tokenism? (Tara's alter ego)</p>

My checklist for assessing your journals:

- Shows evidence of engaging with the texts and with group members
- Has at least 10 full written 8 ½ x 11 pages per set— or 7 pages typed like the above.

Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Class topics/activities.	Read by this date	*	Assessments due
	GENDER			
M 1/12	Introductions/course overview			
W 1/14	Pedagogical paradigms	Ped. Par. Handout	r	
F 1/16	Media images of women: <i>Killing Us Softly III</i> .			
W 1/21	Sign up for mentor teachers; introduce teaching and research projects Girls in English classrooms	Benjamin & Irwin-Divitis , O'Donnell-Allen	G	
F 1/23	Body biographies	<i>Speak</i>	G	
M 1/26	Boys in English classrooms	Smith & Wilhelm, Bickmore, "A New Kind of Gravity"	G	
W 1/28	Media images of men: <i>Tough Guise</i>		G	
F 1/30	" "			
M 2/2	Unit plans: Overview, rationales	Smagorinsky ch. 1, 2, 8-10	r	
W 2/4	Incorporating movies? <i>Speak</i> 1 st half	<i>Inexcusable</i>	G	
F 2/6	" " <i>Speak</i> 2 nd half			(G) Gender journals
	RACE			
M 2/9	White privilege	McIntosh	R	
W 2/11	Still an issue? Obama's race speech			
F 2/13	"A girl like me"	Delpit	R	(r) Rationale
M 2/16	Unit plans: Designing authentic questions	Smagorinsky ch. 3	d	
W 2/18	Central High School documentary	<i>Monster</i>	R	
F 2/20	" "			Research proposal
M 2/23	Incorporating song lyrics: race songs			
W 2/25	Unit plans: Assessments & rubrics	Smagorinsky 5-7, Spandel, Wilson	ar	(d) Discussion questions
F 2/27	Magazine activity			
M 3/2	<i>Crash</i>			
W 3/4	<i>Crash</i>			
F 3/6	<i>Crash</i>	<i>First Part Last</i>	R	
M 3/9	<i>Boston Public</i> episode		R	
W 3/11	Addressing race in English	Baker, Kirkland	R	(R) Race journals
F 3/13	Sharing A & R's			(ar) Assessments & rubrics
	CLASS (after spring break)			
M 3/23	Unit plans: Introductory activities	Smagorinsky ch. 13, AWBR article, opinionnaire article	i	
W 3/25	Addressing class in English	Hartman, RTE Manuscript	C	
F 3/27	" "	<i>Bastard out of Carolina</i>	C	
M 3/30	Research project update			(i) Intro activities
W 4/1	<i>Babel</i>		C	
F 4/3	"			
M 4/6	"	<i>Where the Heart Is</i> , "Marigolds"	C	
W 4/8	Intersections of race, class, and gender		C	(C) Class journals
F 4/10	Efficacy of lit circles			Lit circle reflection
M 4/13	TBA (<i>Where the Heart Is?</i>)			
W 4/15	TBA			
F 4/17	Sharing teaching project/experiences			Teaching project
M 4/20	Guest speaker on "real" unit planning			
W 4/22	" "			
F 4/24	Sharing research project/experiences			Research project
M 4/27	Workshop			
W 4/29	Workshop			
F 5/1	Last day of class-celebration?			Unit plan
5/4-5/6	Oral exam appointments			

* The letters in this column are attached to the required readings and correspond to the assessments in which I'll expect you to reference them as follows:

G = Gender journals; R = Race journals; C = Class journals. r = rationale; d = discussion questions; ar = assessments & rubrics; i = introductory activities.