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### ENG 4906Z-600: Issues in Teaching English

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**Issues in Teaching English: Teaching Early Literary Texts in the Age of Text**  
**ENG 4906/4906z, Section 600**  
**Online/Summer 2020**

Instructor: Dr. Melissa Caldwell

Email: [mcaldwell@eiu.edu](mailto:mcaldwell@eiu.edu)

Office Hours: Wednesday 1-3pm, or by appointment (see procedures below)

**Required Course Texts**

- All course readings will be posted on D2L
- Primary literary text of student's choice (any edition, print or electronic)

**I. Course Description, Expectations, and Components of the Course**

**Course Description**

We live in a one-click culture where efficiency and ease of use are qualities we have come to expect from most of the media we consume—including literary texts. And yet texts that pre-date the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be especially difficult to navigate for the 21<sup>st</sup>-century student and can hardly be called “user friendly.” This 8-week summer course is designed for teachers or pre-service teachers who are interested in thinking about how we teach “the classics” in effective and meaningful ways for our students. The course will largely be constructed as a workshop in which students work on developing or revamping their teaching of early texts. Participants in the course will be able to choose a primary text they want to focus on (e.g., *The Odyssey*, one of Shakespeare’s plays, *The Scarlet Letter*, or another appropriate text) while they craft instructional materials and learn new strategies and pedagogical approaches that increase student engagement and learning. Every week we will grapple with a new critical issue concerning questions of accessibility, culturally relevant pedagogy, literacy, periodization, textual pairings, the value of difficulty, adaptation, and more.

**Minimum Technological Requirements for English 4906**

- Reliable access to the Internet
- Ability to navigate various aspects of D2L, our learning management system
- Ability read documents using Word, PowerPoint, and Adobe Acrobat
- Ability to create and post documents using Microsoft Word or a comparable format
- Ability to record and post a short video of yourself

\*\*If you need help with any of these technological requirements, please contact me.

### Course Expectations and Netiquette

Because this is an 8-week online graduate summer course, the reading and writing requirements will be particularly demanding. Please be prepared to devote considerable time to the reading, writing, and other assignments listed below. If you need help, you have several options for contacting me. I will answer queries both via D2L email and Panthermail ([mcaldwell@eiu.edu](mailto:mcaldwell@eiu.edu)), typically within 24 hours, often much sooner. You are also welcome to contact me to arrange a video conference. If you have questions or find yourself falling behind, please **do not wait** to contact me.

Regarding course netiquette, I ask you to observe the following policies:

- 1.) Be considerate of other discussion participants when interacting via the discussion board or any other electronic form for the duration of this course. Remember that often a writer's intention and tone can be lost in electronic formats. Err on the side of too much courtesy rather than too little.
- 2.) Dismissive, malicious, or otherwise inappropriate comments will not be tolerated.
- 3.) You are *absolutely* welcome to express your own ideas and opinion *and* to agree *or* disagree with your peers, I ask only that you do so courteously.
- 4.) If you do not respect your classmates or your tone is inappropriate, you may be asked to redo an assignment and/or lose credit for the assignment entirely. In particularly severe cases, you may fail or be dismissed from the course at my discretion.
- 5.) Read all feedback you receive from me and discuss any questions you have about your feedback. If you are ever in doubt about whether a post violates course netiquette, please email me *before* you post it.

### Course Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the course, the students will be able to:

1. Reflect on their current or future teaching practice of classic literary texts in the high school classroom, understand the ways in which a text may be "difficult," and consider the value of adaptation, paired readings, culturally relevant pedagogy, and other classroom practices for their own teaching practice
2. Reflect on the reading process and various issues-- theoretical, practical, cultural, and political--that contribute to different understandings and experiences for different readers.
3. Effectively design a new unit plan, or significantly revise a current unit plan, centered on a classic literary text for the high school classroom, using a wide variety of pedagogical strategies to make classic literary texts more accessible to students.
4. Evaluate and offer constructive feedback on unit plans and teaching demonstration of peers.
5. Demonstrate teaching strategies that have been acquired over the course of the class.

## Office Hours and Weekly Zoom “Brown Bag”

My weekly office hours are going to be divided into two parts. Part I is what I’m going to call a weekly “Brown Bag” from 12-1. It’s a time when we can come together, share ideas, ask general questions about texts or pedagogical strategies, and just explore in a more informal way some of the things we will be talking about. This is the only synchronous aspect of this course, and because it is synchronous, I am making it voluntary. Feel free to drop in as much or as little as you like—and feel free to bring your lunch! I will put a Zoom link on the front page of our D2L site prior to the meeting time every week.

The second part of my office hours will be on Wednesdays from 1-3pm. This is the time I have set aside to have individual meetings with you if you are having a specific problem you don’t want to bring to the Brown Bag. Since these are virtual appointments, I will make them in 20 minute increments (e.g., 1-1:20pm, 1:20-1:40pm, etc.). Please email me in advance (preferably 24 hours in advance) to set up an appointment time. I’m also happy to make appointments at other times by request, and I’m happy to accommodate multiple platforms (e.g., Zoom, D2L Collaborate Ultra, Google Hangouts, a simple telephone call, etc.).

## II. Course Assignments

### Assignments, Grade Distribution and Scale

Assignment	Weight	Final Grading Scale	
Discussion Forum Posts	30%	90-100	A
Literature Review	10%	80-89	B
Final Project	40%	70-79	C
Teaching Demonstration	10%	60-69	D
Peer Evaluation	10%	Below 60	F

For information about all course assignments, please see assignment sheets posted in D2L in the Assignments module.

### Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). The English Department’s policy on plagiarism states the following:

“Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—‘The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s original work’ (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Office of Student Standards.”

To put this another way: plagiarism absolutely will not be tolerated in this class. Plagiarists will be reported to the Office of Student Standards and will fail the course. If you are confused about plagiarism at any point in the semester, it is your responsibility to ask me about it before you turn in an assignment.

**ENG 4906 Course Outline**

Dates	Topics	Assignments
Week 1: Defining Difficulty in Literature  June 1-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course Orientation</li> <li>• Define “difficulty” in literature</li> <li>• Choose text for course</li> <li>• Identify frame or entry point</li> </ul>	<b>Reading</b> —Module 1 content <b>Discussion 1</b> (full group)—biography and the nature and value of difficulty  <b>Optional:</b> Weekly Zoom Brown Bag, Wednesday at 12 noon
Week 2: Literacy and the Challenges of “Old English”  June 8-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student literacy</li> <li>• Choosing the right edition of a text (when possible)</li> <li>• Strategies for mitigating “old” English</li> </ul>	<b>Reading</b> —Module 2 content <b>Discussion 2</b> (small group)—entry points and challenges of “old” English  <b>Optional:</b> Weekly Zoom Brown Bag, Wednesday at 12 noon
Week 3: Learning the Classics with English Language Learners  June 15-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching classic texts to English Language Learners (ELLs)</li> <li>• Tiered Text approach</li> <li>• Accessing prior knowledge when teaching early texts</li> <li>• Graphic Organizers and other strategies to lighten language load</li> </ul>	<b>Reading</b> —Module 3 content <b>Discussion 3</b> (small group)—exploring strategies for teaching ELLs and other struggling readers  <b>Optional:</b> Weekly Zoom Brown Bag, Wednesday at 12 noon
Week 4: Classic Texts and the Question of Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culturally Relevant Pedagogy</li> <li>• Teaching the canon through disruption</li> </ul>	<b>Reading</b> —Module 4 content <b>Discussion 4</b> (small group)—exploring the value of culturally relevant pedagogy for teaching classic text to diverse student populations

June 22- 28		<b>Optional:</b> Weekly Zoom Brown Bag, Wednesday at 12 noon
Week 5: Teaching with Context June 29-July 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The relationship between history and literature</li> <li>• History as perspective</li> <li>• Whose history are we teaching, whose are we ignoring</li> </ul>	<b>Reading</b> —Module 5 content <b>Discussion 5</b> (small group)—using history to demystify texts and open up perspectives  <b>Literature Review Assignment</b> due by July 5 at 11:59pm  <b>Optional:</b> Weekly Zoom Brown Bag, Wednesday at 12 noon
Week 6: Teaching with Paired Texts July 6-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scaffolding with paired texts</li> </ul>	<b>Reading</b> —Module 6 content <b>Discussion 6</b> (small groups)—exploration of paired texts for your primary text  <b>Optional:</b> Weekly Zoom Brown Bag, Wednesday at 12 noon
Week 7: Teaching with Adaptation July 13-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptation</li> <li>• Uses of film in teaching classic literature</li> <li>• Constructing alternative points of view</li> </ul>	<b>Reading</b> —Module 7 content <b>Discussion 7</b> (small groups)—exploration of adaptation for your primary text  <b>Optional:</b> Weekly Zoom Brown Bag, Wednesday at 12 noon
Week 8: Final Project Week July 20-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Unit Plans</li> <li>• Watch Mini-Lessons and complete Peer Evaluation/Feedback forms</li> </ul>	<b>Mini Lesson Due by July 22</b>  <b>Unit Plans Due by July 24</b>  <b>Peer Evaluation forms due by July 24</b>

**Have a great rest of your summer!**