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ENG 5061-032: Teaching college literature: History, theory, practice

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TEACHING COLLEGE LITERATURE: HISTORY, THEORY, PRACTICE

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Learning Objectives

General Objectives

Like other graduate courses in English, this course offers you the opportunity to enhance your abilities

- (1) to read challenging material,
- (2) to discuss analytically what you have read,
- (3) to conduct both primary and secondary research, and
- (4) to write clearly and persuasively, demonstrating high-level analysis and synthesis.

Course-Specific Objectives

After successfully completing this course, you should be able to

- (a) describe major learning theories and literary theories relevant to planning college literature courses and course sessions
- (b) identify and describe the theories of learning and theories of literature implicit in a particular practice for teaching literature
- (c) create theoretically coherent, practical syllabi and course materials for a college literature course
- (d) describe the major historical developments in the profession of college literature teaching and draw inferences about the relationship between present and historical practices
- (e) reflect upon your strengths and areas for improvement as a potential college literature teacher
- (f) articulate in a theoretically informed way your philosophy about the purposes and methods of college literature teaching

Texts to Be Issued by TRS

Showalter, *Teaching Literature*
Graff, *Beyond the Culture Wars*
Graff, *Professing Literature*

Activities and Grading

		Final Grading Scale	
Reflective writings	100 points	A	920-1000 points
Class contribution	100 points	B	840-919 points
MLA <i>Approaches</i> Analysis	100 points	C	780-839 points
Course materials packet	150 points	D	700-779 points
Teaching philosophy	100 points	F	699 points and below
Class teaching exercises	150 points		
Historical research project	100 points		
Mid-Term Exam	100 points		
Final Exam	100 points		

Policies

Information for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

The English Department's Statement on Plagiarism

“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 Judicial Affairs Office.”

My Statement on Plagiarism

If time pressure, the difficulty of an assignment, or some other pressure tempts you to resort to plagiarism, I invite you to choose instead to talk to me about whatever’s creating the difficulty.

Late Work

Late work will only be accepted if you have asked me for an extension and I have approved it at least one day before the work is due.

Attendance and Make-Up Work

A seminar fails without participants. For each class you miss, 10 points will be deducted from your final grade. In accordance with University policy, you may make up in-class work you miss due to a legitimate illness or emergency, but it is your responsibility to initiate discussion with me regarding make-up work and no make-up work will be accepted after the final exam.

Overview of Projects

Reflective writings. The goal of the reflective writings will be to get you to bring analytical tools drawn from our theoretical and methodological readings to bear on your own experiences, beliefs, and knowledge about the teaching of college literature. These will not be journal entries; they will be fairly guided and structured writings that follow from our readings.

Class contribution. A graduate seminar depends on the engaged participation of all its members; coming to class having read the assigned materials carefully and ready to discuss them, as well as a willingness to participate in other in-class activities (which may sometimes mean taking risks) are essential components of success in the course, so “class contribution” as a grading category recognizes the work that making a meaningful contribution entails.

Teaching philosophy. You will produce a brief statement of your approach to the teaching of literature. I don’t expect that all your ideas about teaching will be formulated until you’ve had more experience, but the exercise of trying to articulate where you are after our theoretical readings will be a good starting point for continued reflection.

Exams. Both exams will be designed to evaluate your progress toward the course-specific learning objectives, especially the ability to analyze the theories of literature and learning implicit in a given teaching practice.

Integrated Assignments

The following projects are all connected in that they should all help you develop expertise in the teaching of a particular kind of course (which you will select). That means you will need to decide during the first week on your subject for both the course materials packet and the *Approaches* analysis.

Course materials packet. You will create a syllabus for a college literature course of your choice, along with a session plan and all related materials for a single class session from that syllabus, and a rationale statement explaining the choices you made in both syllabus and session plan.

MLA *Approaches* Analysis. You will read and write a focused analysis of a volume of the MLA’s *Approaches to Teaching World Literature* series that could be helpful in thinking about the course you design for the course materials packet.

Class teaching exercises. You will participate in three graded exercises in which you practice classroom skills (there may be others, but those won’t be graded). (1) The mini-lecture should be drawn from material related to your course materials packets. (2) The class discussion leading exercise will focus on a single literary text that I will choose. (3) The final exercise will ask you to lead a half a class session (about thirty minutes) focused on a short text of your own choice (and drawn from your course materials packet), which the class will have read in advance of your presentation.

Historical research report. You will research the history of the teaching of the topic you choose for your course materials packet and write a brief (4-5 pages) report on what you learn.

Schedule

Notes:

Readings should be completed before the class date on which they are listed. Writing projects are also due on the date on which they are listed—except when it's specifically indicated that we will complete a reflective writing in class.

Showalter; Graff, *Beyond the Culture Wars*; and Graff, *Professing Literature* refer to books issued by TRS. All other readings will be distributed in class. For complete bibliographical citations of the articles to be read, see the bibliography following the schedule.

Schedule is subject to change. Most importantly, additional short literary readings may be added. Announcements will be made in class.

M June 11 **Introductions: Participants; Goals; Brief overview of historical issues**

THEORIES

T June 12 **Introduction to theories of teaching literature**

Writing: Reflective Writing #1; brainstorm topic for course materials project.

Reading: Showalter, chapter 2, "Theories of Teaching Literature"

W June 13 **What counts as literature? The debate that won't go away**

Reading: Graff, *Professing Literature*, pp. 99-100 ("The Establishment of the Canon"); Gallagher, Hassan, Insko, and Clark on canons; core argument of *The Vanishing Shakespeare*

Writing (in class): Reflective Writing #2

R June 14 **Goals and objectives: What are we trying to do?**

Reading: Bain, Chapter 1; hooks, "Introduction" and "Engaged Pedagogy"

Writing: Reflective Writing #3

Also due in class: Topic for course materials project & 2 choices for *Approaches* analysis

M June 18 **How do we learn? A brief introduction**

Reading: Bain, Chapter 2; Gregory

T June 19 **Teaching the conflicts**

Reading: Arnold, "Dover Beach"; Graff, *Beyond the Culture Wars*, Chapter 3; Symposium on Teaching the Conflicts (*Pedagogy* Spring 2003)

Writing: Reflective Writing #4

W June 20 **Identity in the classroom (1)**

Reading: hooks, "Teaching in a Multicultural World" and "Confronting Class in the Classroom"; Daly

Writing: Reflective Writing #5

- R June 21 **Identity in the classroom (2)**
Reading: Irving, “Rip Van Winkle”; Fetterley, from *The Resisting Reader*; Linkin
Writing: Reflective Writing #6
- M June 25 **Identity in the classroom (3)**
Reading: Brueggemann & Modellmogg; Owen, “Dulce Et Decorum Est”; Fleming, “Owen at Annapolis”
Writing: Reflective Writing #7
- T June 26 **Politics in the classroom**
Reading: Fleming, “What Do We Tell the Grunts?” (handout); Graff, *Beyond the Culture Wars* chap. 8; Thompson
Writing: Reflective Writing #8

METHODS

- W June 27 **Introduction to methods of teaching literature**
Reading: Showalter, Chapter 3
- R June 28 **Teaching reading in the literature classroom**
Reading: Scholes; Linkon
- M July 2 **Teaching writing in the literature classroom**
Reading: Wolfe; Hanlon
- T July 3 **Teaching poetry**
Reading: Showalter, Chapter 4; Tucker
- W July 4—no class
- R July 5 **Lab day**
****Approaches analysis due****
- M July 9 **Mid-Term Exam**
- T July 10 **Teaching drama**
Reading: Showalter, Chapter 5; Wood
- W July 11 **Teaching fiction**
Reading: Showalter, Chapter 6; McGann et al.
- R July 12 **Lecturing**
Writing (in class): Reflective Writing #9
- M July 16 **Mini-lectures (1st teaching exercise)**
****Teaching philosophy due.****
- T July 17 **Mini-lectures continued. Course planning and syllabus construction**
- W July 18 **Leading class discussions**
Reading: Weisser
Writing (in class): Reflective Writing #10

- R July 19 **Leading discussion (2nd teaching exercise)**
****Choice of text for 3rd teaching exercise due****
Reading: TBA
- M July 23 **Discussion of research project and final teaching exercises**
****Course materials packet due****
- T July 24 **Grading**
Reading: Gellis; Price
- W July 25- **3rd teaching exercise: Sessions on short texts**
W Aug 1
- Reading:** TBA
- R Aug 2 **Final Exam**
****Historical research project due****

Bibliography of Course Materials (excluding literary texts)

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- Clark, Miriam Marty. "Reading Students Reading in the Postcanonical Age." *Pedagogy* 5.2 (2005): 297-303.
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- Fleming, Bruce. *Annapolis Autumn: Life, Death, and Literature at the U.S. Naval Academy*. New York: New Press, 2005.
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- Wood, Jacqueline. "Enacting Texts: African American Drama, Politics, and Presentation in the African American Literature Classroom." *College Literature* 32.1 (2005): 103-126.