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ENG 3401-001: Methods of Teaching Composition in Secondary Schools

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English 3401:
Methods of Teaching Composition in Secondary Schools
Course Policy & Syllabus
ENG 3401 – TR – 2:00-3:15pm – 3130 Coleman Hall

Instructor: Dr. Melissa Ames
Office: 3821 Coleman Hall
Office Hours: T: 11-12; 1-2; 3:30-4:30
R: 11-12; 1-2; 3:30-4:30
Or by Appointment
Email: mames@eiu.edu

Course Description: This course explores various best practices and approaches to teaching and evaluating written composition in secondary schools. Course work will consist primarily of reading and responding to pedagogical texts, applying the findings in such to contemporary educational concerns, and crafting/modeling instructional tools both independently and cooperatively in ways that mirror professional learning communities. The required work for this course includes crafting lesson plans, thematic units, a course design, and various reflective essays. This course requires on-site observation hours and the live-text submission of one required assignment.

Course Objectives: Following the NCTE Guidelines and Illinois Content Area Standards, after the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. demonstrate how reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and thinking are interrelated;
2. recognize the impact of cultural, economic, and social environments upon language;
3. show a respect for an understanding of diversity in language use/patterns/dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social settings;
4. demonstrate the influence of language and visual images on thinking and composition;
5. demonstrate how written discourse can influence thought and action;
6. display an understanding of the role of technology in communication;
7. use major sources of research and theory and understand the relationship between research and practice;
8. examine, evaluate, and select resources for classroom use and teacher planning;
9. design instruction to meet the needs of all students and provide for students’ continuous progress and success;
10. organize classroom environments and learning experiences that promote effective whole class, small group, and individual work;
11. create learning environments that promote respect for and support of individual differences of ethnicity, race, language, culture, gender, and ability;
12. use assessment as an integral part of instruction and learning.

Required Texts and Materials:

3401 Course Pack – available at University Print Shop – Panther Print & Copy Center.
(A three ring binder w/ divider tabs is suggested to organize this course pack)
USB-compatible device for saving documents (i.e. a jump drive)

**Course Requirements:** You must complete all major assignments to be eligible to pass the class. Your grade will be based on a point system that factors in all scores you earn on major writing assignments/projects, minor assignments/products, and in-class work/participation. Attendance is mandatory and will be factored into your in-class grade. Detailed assignment instructions and scoring rubrics will accompany all major assignments as the course progresses. In accordance with NCATE content-area guidelines, five clinical experience hours, in addition to required College of Education hours, are required for course completion. Also, College of Education Live Text requirements will apply to one required course assignment.

**In-Class Work/Participation (200pts):**

*Daily work* – includes in-class activities, writing, peer response, informal group work, and oral presentations.

*Response Pieces* – includes short formal or informal written responses to the required reading, the media critiques, and class discussion/debates.

*Participation* – includes attendance, participation in class activities, and course preparation. Points may be deducted due to tardiness/early departure, lack of participation, failure to bring texts and other needed materials to class, and/or behavior that distracts from class activities.

**Major Writing Assignments/Projects (550pts):**

*Unit Plan Project* – compose a conceptual unit plan demonstrating your awareness of teaching composition. Use the class readings, discussion, oral presentations, personal experience, and your additional scholarly research to inform your choices. Your unit plan should reflect knowledge of contemporary practices of teaching writing. (Note: a printed copy of this project will be turned into Dr. Ames on the initial due date and a revised copy will be re-submitted inside the professional portfolio; this revised copy will also be turned in through Live Text as a required component of the course). (100pts)

*Course Design* – craft a skeleton for a semester long Language Arts course. (The course that you envision can utilize your completed unit if you so choose). This course design will demonstrate your ability to map out an entire course, link units together, and plan student activities/assignments that build off of previously mastered skills. This assignment will be utilized again at a later date for an in-class assignment. (100pts)

*Writing Pedagogy Essay* – select an area of writing pedagogy to research (i.e. writing-to-learn, writing-across-the-curriculum, teaching creative writing, peer responding, revising, literacy, assessing writing, teaching English Language Learners, journaling, teaching persuasive writing, teaching awareness of audience, teaching grammar in context, teaching genre, mini-lessons, publishing student writing, gender issues, collaborative writing, writing with technology, etc). Based on substantive research on your chosen topic, prepare a professional, argument-based paper in MLA or APA style on the issue or practice you selected. Include a Works Cited or Reference Page (depending on the documentation style selected). Blend information from your research with assigned readings and your experiences to make an assertion. (100pts)

*Authentic Assessment Assignment* – create a non-traditional writing assignment that could serve as an assessment of student learning at the closure of a lesson or unit. Possible choices include (but are not limited to): multi-genre research paper, thematic project,
presentation/speech, artistic/creative literary response/interpretation, or writing portfolio. (100pts)

**Evaluation Simulation & Reflection Assignment** – participation in a grading simulation that includes grading a set of composition essays, recording the time that it takes to complete this task, and reflecting on the experience and your state of mind at various points throughout the process. (50pts)

**Professional Portfolio** – a collection of documents and work that demonstrate your competence as an instructor and teaching philosophy will be instrumental once you embark on the job hunt. Being so, you will compile this portfolio and submit during this course. Included within its contents will be: a table of contents, teaching philosophy, resume/curriculum vitae, essay on writing pedagogy, (revised) unit plan, course design, and evidence of professional organization membership. (100pts)

**Minor Writing Assignments/Products (250pts):**

**Instructional Planning Tools** – includes Course Design Modification (50pts), Cooperative Learning Lesson (50pts) and Grammar Mini-Lesson (25pts).

**Student Activities/Assignments** – includes Peer Editing Rubric (25pts), Research/MLA Activity (25pts), and Pre-Writing Graphic Organizer (25pts).

**Curriculum Expansion Items** – includes Creative Writing Justification (25pts) and Real World Writing Assignment/Activity (25pts).

**Course Grade:** Your grade in this course will be calculated using a straight point system and standard grading scale. Your final grade will be determined by the following breakdown and grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Writing Assignments/Projects</td>
<td>550pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Writing Assignments/Products</td>
<td>250pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Work/Participation</td>
<td>200pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Points Possible</td>
<td>1000pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **A** = 90%-100%
- **B** = 80%-89%
- **C** = 70%-79%
- **D** = 60%-69%
- **F** = 0%-59%

**Instructor Class Policies:**

**Submitted Assignments:** All documents should be submitted on time and must have a professional appearance. Every assignment should be typed on white, 8.5 x 11 paper and formatted according to MLA guidelines and standards when applicable. All assignments should be submitted in a slim 2-pocket folder that houses the final assignment and scoring rubric (and drafts/peer-editing checklists when applicable). For larger assignments (course design, unit plan, portfolio), a larger binder can be used if needed. For your own protection, keep copies of all completed work.

**Assignment Due Dates:** **LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AND WILL RESULT IN A GRADE OF ZERO (0).** Assignments, including drafts, are due at the beginning of class. Computer Classroom printers are for in-class activities only, so bring hard copies of your assignments to class. E-mail attachments will not be accepted as substitutes for hard copies of your work. Computer and printer problems are not an excuse for turning in late work, so draft and print well in advance.
In-Class Work: In-class activities must be completed in the class period they are assigned. No make-ups will be given on any of these activities unless arrangements have been made with the instructor in advance.

Class Attendance: Because this course emphasizes writing as process and as collaborative activity, attendance is essential. During the projects, your classmates will rely on your feedback. Class exercises, peer responses, and group work cannot be made up and their lack of completion will negatively affect your in-class work/participation grade. After three absences, each additional absence will also result in a penalty of one full letter grade subtracted from your final course grade. For an absence to be excused it must be considered a legitimate and verifiable emergency and documentation must be provided. Legitimate and verifiable emergencies include those instances for which you can provide documentation for why you had to miss class. Acceptable documents include accident reports, doctors’ notes, hospital forms, and employer notices. Although these documents will be accepted, any pattern of documented absences will be questioned and addressed. If it is an excused absence, attending a pre-approved workshop or lecture appropriate to the course description, you can make up the time but not the work missed. Perfect attendance merits the addition of 20 extra-credit points to the in-class work/participation category.

Proper Documentation of Emergency: Assignments may only be turned in late if the student provides documentation of an emergency that prevented him/her from attending class. Proper documentation must be an original document (no photocopies), containing the student’s name, and cover the date(s) in question, and be signed by a professional (i.e. doctor). An email is not proper documentation.

Presentations: Please be present when you are scheduled to give a presentation. If you miss class on the day of a scheduled presentation and your absence is undocumented you will receive a zero and will not be able to make up the presentation.

Plagiarism: In accordance with English Department and University policies, “Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism – ‘The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation as one’s original work’ (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) – has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty up to an including immediate assignment of the 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.” The best argument against plagiarism is that you cheat yourself out of the education you are here to obtain when you copy someone else’s work. If you believe that a specific instance in your writing might constitute plagiarism, please consult me prior to turning in the final draft.

Students with Disabilities: If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services.
English 3401 Course Schedule

NOTE: This course is allotted both an Integrated Technology Classroom & a Traditional Classroom for its use throughout the term. The schedule below is broken up into "weeks". On EVEN weeks this class will utilize the Integrated Technology Classrooms (the computer lab) – 3120 Coleman – and on ODD weeks we will meet in the Traditional Classroom – 3130 Coleman. Please make sure that you are present in the room assigned for us on any given week.

Week #1: The Joys of Teaching (and the Pains of Teaching the Overwhelmingly Large Curriculum Category They Call Language Arts)

T 8/20 – Course Introduction & Overview
R 8/22 – The Myth & Mystique of the “Great” Teacher (From Hollywood Portrayals Our Profession to Textbook Snapshots) / The Classroom as Writing Workshop
Prepared Reading: Teaching Chapters 1 & 2, Middle Chapter 1

Week #2: Teaching Composition

T 8/27 – Writing Across the Spectrum
Prepared Reading: Teaching Chapter 6
R 8/29 – Debating with the Experts on Teaching Dos and Don’ts / The Collins Writing Program / Pre-Writing Strategies / Graphic Organizers
Prepared Reading: Inside Chapter 1 & 2
Topic Selections for Writing Pedagogy Paper Due

Week #3: Writing for Different Purposes

T 9/3 – Revision (the student as editor and as peer editor) / Publishing, Performing, or Sharing Student Writing
Prepared Reading: Inside Chapter 10 & 15
Assignment Due: Pre-Writing Graphic Organizer
R 9/5 – Writing to Learn: Note-Taking and Close Reading / Logs & Journals
Prepared Reading: Teaching Chapter 8, Inside Chapter 5
Assignment Due: Peer-Editing Checklist

Week #4: Conceptualizing YOUR Language Arts Classroom (and then Getting There)

T 9/10 – Voice & Style – to Each Their Own
Prepared Reading: Inside 6
Must Have Copy of Favorite Poem or Fiction Passage in Class
R 9/12 – Your Vision & Procedures – The Classroom as Utopia / Peer Editing For Writing Pedagogy Paper
Prepared Reading: Middle Chapter 4 & 5
Rough Draft of Writing Pedagogy Essay Must be in Class

Week #5: Backwards Planning – Course Designs, Unit Development, and Lesson Plans

T 9/17 – Curriculum Goals / Writing Objectives
Prepared Reading: Teaching Chapter 3
Suggested Reading: Inside Chapter 3
Rough Draft of Writing Pedagogy Essay Must be in Class
R 9/19 – Crafting Units & Lesson Plans – The Hook: Anticipatory Sets / Bellwork / The Components of a Traditional Lesson Plan
Week #6: Differentiated Instruction and Authentic Assessment
T 9/24 – Making Writing Meaningful / Memoir / Portfolio Writing / Rubrics
Prepared Reading: Middle Chapter 11
R 9/26 – Different Types of Writing Activities & Assignments / Layered Curriculum / Collaborative Writing & Cooperative Learning
Prepared Reading: Inside Chapter 4

Week #7: The Wide World of Research – From Traditional Term Papers to Multigenre Papers
T 10/1 – Research Evolutionalized? The Multigenre Paper vs. The Traditional Term Paper
Prepared Reading: Blending Chapters 6-10, 14
Assignment Due: Course Design
R 10/3 – Teaching Research (and Finding Plagiarism) / MLA
Prepared Reading: Blending Chapters 1-5

Week #8: Assessing Quality Writing – The Evaluation and Grading Dilemmas
T 10/8 – Reading Informational Texts / Defining “Assessment”
Prepared Reading: Teaching Chapter 9 & 12, Blending 24
Assignment Due: Research/MLA Activity
R 10/10 – Analyzing Common Assessments & Writing Prompts
Prepared Reading: Inside Chapter 14, Argument Chapters 1-3

Week #9: Teaching (and Scoring) Writing in a Test-Crazed World
T 10/15 – Teaching to the Test? Standardized Tests & Beyond / Peer Review Session for Unit Rationale
Prepared Reading: Middle Chapter 9, Argument Chapters 4-5
Finished Rough Draft of Unit Rationale Must be in Class
R 10/17 – Creating “Traditional” Assessments / Exams
Prepared Reading: Middle Chapter 7, Argument Chapters 6-7
Assignment Due: Authentic Assessment Assignment & Rubric

Week #10: Writing Skills and Grammar Debates
Prepared Reading: Inside Chapter 8, 9
Assignment Due: Evaluation Simulation
R 10/24 – Writing Skills & Grammar Concepts
Prepared Reading: Grammar Chapters 1-3

Week #11: Two Sides of the Same Coin? Composition and Creative Writing
T 10/29 – The Art of the Mini-Lesson
Prepared Reading: Grammar Chapter 5; Middle Chapter 6
Suggested Reading: Teaching Chapter 7
Assignment Due: Grammar Mini-Lesson & Peer Critique
R 10/31 – Beyond the Standard Curriculum – Fiction Writing
Prepared Reading: *Blending* Chapters 11, 12, & 17  
**Assignment Due:** Creative Writing Justification Letter  
**Assignment Due:** Unit Plan & Cooperative Learning Lesson Plan

**Week #12: Composition Beyond the Classroom Walls**

T 11/5 – Blending Genre & Connecting to Pop Culture – Music as Poetry  
Prepared Reading: *Blending* Chapter 15 & *Inside* Chapter 11; Begin *Teacher Man* – Part I  
R 11/7 – Workshop Day for Portfolio – No Class

**Week #13: Real World Teaching & Writing**

T 11/12 – The Real World of Teaching – Discussion of McCourt’s Memoir (heavy focus on the opening chapters) / Resume Overview (bring material)  
Prepared Reading: *Teacher Man* – Part I complete  
**Response Paper Due**  
*Bring Portfolio Works-in-Progress to Class for Continued Drafting*

R 11/14 – Peer Editing & Peer Portfolio Conference  
Prepared Reading: *Teacher Man* – Part II complete, begin Part III  
**Assignment Due:** Resume & Clinical Experience Drafts  
**Assignment Due:** Visual Rhetoric/Media Analysis Writing Prompt

**Week #14: Reality Check - Fitting it All In Under Time (and Curriculum) Restraints**

T 11/19 – The Writings of the World – Discussion of McCourt’s Memoir (heavy focus on Chapters 6, 13, & 14)  
Prepared Reading: *Teacher Man* – Part III complete; *Middle* Chapter 14  
**Response Paper Due**  
R 11/21 – The Time Crunch & Schedule Alteration Game  
**In-Class Assignment:** Course Design Modification & Rationale  
(Have Graded Course Design in Class)  
**Assignment Due:** Real World Writing Activity/Assignment

T 11/26 – No Class – Thanksgiving Break  
R 11/28 – No Class – Thanksgiving Break

**Week #15: Teaching Composition in the Digital/Computer Age**

T 12/3 – Technology: Friend or Foe?  
Prepared Reading: “How Computers are Making Kids Dumb,” “Young and Wired,” “Why Heather Can Write” (found in course binder)  
**Assignment Due:** Professional Portfolio  
Live Text Version Unit Plan Must Be Submitted  
R 12/5 – From Theory to Practice: Final Thoughts & Closure  
Prepared Reading: *Teaching* Chapter 14

**Final Exam Week / End of Semester**

(Note: This Schedule is Subject to Change at the Instructor’s Discretion & Reading Selections are Abbreviated by Title)