

Teaching Literature **English 610-002, Spring 2004**

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Texts

Required Books:

Young, Art, and Toby Fulwiler, eds. *When Writing Teachers Teach Literature: Bringing Writing to Reading*. Portsmouth, NH: Boyton/Cook, 1995. ISBN: 0-86709-363-3

Appelman, Deborah. *Critical Encounters in High School English: Teaching Literary Theory to Adolescents*. New York/Urbana: Teachers College Press/NCTE, 2000. ISBN: 0-8077-3974-X

Comley, Nancy R., Gregory L. Ulmer, and Robert E. Scholes. *Text Book: Writing Through Literature*. 3rd ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002. ISBN: 0312248792

Electronic Sources:

Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture (journal available through project muse)

To access free online *Pedagogy* articles:

1. go to <http://library.gmu.edu>
2. click on databases
3. click on P
4. scroll down to select Project Muse
5. put in your ss# (if off campus)
6. click on journals
7. scroll down to P and select *Pedagogy*
8. select vol and iss
9. select html to read online, pdf to print out

Sheridan, Daniel. *Teaching Secondary English: Readings and Applications*. 2nd ed. (e-book available through gmU library)

To access TSE through the library:

1. go to <http://library.gmu.edu>
2. click on library catalogues
3. click on mason library
4. search using book title (use title without subtitle)
5. click on electronic version
6. scroll down and select electronic version again
7. put in your ss# (if off campus)
8. select browse online
9. arrow buttons on left can get you to specific chapters

Suggested Reading:

I also recommend that you join the National Council for Teachers of English, if you are not already a member, and begin regular reading of the NCTE journals—*The English Journal*, *College English*, *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*. Student memberships are available at a low yearly rate. If interested, see the NCTE web site at <http://www.ncte.org>

Description

This is a course on the theory and practice of teaching texts. Rather than a course about teaching specific works of literature or a course intended to give pre-set strategies to transfer to any classroom, the course is designed to set up a collaborative environment to think about reading, writing, and teaching in a variety of different contexts. Students will be expected to read a variety of texts, respond to those texts in writing, discuss those texts in class, and create assignments to share with the class.

Goals

Students should expect to:

- Begin thinking about teaching from a rhetorical perspective.
- Think about literary theory in the context of teaching.
- Take theoretical concepts and turn them into assignments for specific texts/contexts.
- Examine and critique assignments from various texts, teachers, and other students.

The goal of the course is to provide a rhetorical foundation for each student's future teaching practice. Rather than teach teachers how to teach, the course attempts to provide each student with a foundation for making decisions about the readings you will use, the writing you will do, and the assignments you will create.

Writing Assignments

Blog – The first day of class we will meet in the computer classroom and everyone will set up his/her own web log (blog). Once established, you will need to write weekly posts to your blog as well as respond to your classmates' blogs. There is no requirement on the number of posts or

lengths of posts (a line or two to multiple paragraphs is typical), but one post a week won't be enough. Most blogs are written in daily. Though the print precedent is the diary or journal, the blog should function as your reading and research notes, and should include direct responses to readings, thoughts about teaching, links to resources you find on the web, ideas for assignments you might want to try out, ideas for papers you want to write, reflections on comments made by other members of the class, anything related to teaching. As a reading/teaching log, you'll need to write reflectively about the reading that you are doing and about yourself as a teacher or prospective teacher of literature. Entries should *always maintain professional courtesy* but should not avoid an honest, critical analysis of issues or of comments by other members of the seminar. (I will read and respond to the blogs throughout the semester but will assign a grade to them only at the end of the semester. Each entry is dated, so I can assess the quantity, frequency, and quality of your work.) **(Due Each Week)**

Observation Report – Sometime during the first half of the semester, you need to visit a class conducted by a teacher of literature whose work you admire. I'd like you to take notes on this class and submit to me sometime before or by March 7 a report (at least 1000-1250 words, two pages single-spaced) that summarizes and reflects critically on what you observed. The report should include: a description of the visit (class size, student population, place, time, topics, general format/sequence); a description of the syllabus; an assessment of presentation materials; an analysis of student attention and participation; and analysis of striking teaching methods; an analysis of apparent problems; a general summary of what you learned from the assignment. In general you should ask: How was learning going on in the class? What did the teacher do? What rhetorical techniques did the teacher employ? What did the students do? What techniques of this teacher would you adapt? What changes would you make for your specific teaching situation? (The reports will be graded on level of detail/specificity and level of reflection on your part.) **(Due Week 7)**

Book Review – Write a review (about 1250-1500 words) of a professional book you have read during the course. The book is of your choice, with only the restriction that it is a book about literature—about teaching reading, about an author, about a literary work, about literary theory—rather than a creative or critical work on another subject. See the bibliography on the class web site for a list of some possibilities. Write the analysis as if you were reviewing the books for a professional journal (*The English Journal, The Reading Teacher, The Whole Language Newsletter, College English, or Pedagogy*). The review should summarize the key points of the book's argument and an assessment of the book's argument, relationship to other books in the field, or usefulness for other teachers. Focus on specific benefits the book would have for other teachers (or students, parents, policy makers, etc.). What does the book lack that you feel it should have? What questions does it raise in your mind? How might you use the book? (If you wish, feel free to submit a draft of your analysis up to two weeks before it is due, for my comments. The review will be assessed on its level of detail/specificity, its clarity of argument, and its creativity in connecting the ideas to application.) **(Due Week 10)**

Assignment Presentation – Early in the semester I'll ask you to sign up for a day between weeks 4 and 13 to give a 30-minute presentation of an assignment. The presentation will actually be a demonstration of a technique you have developed (or are in the process of developing) for teaching a particular piece of reading to a particular group of people. If you are currently

teaching, you may choose something you have already tried but would like to revise or you may want to experiment with something you haven't tried before. If you are a prospective teacher, you may want to adapt a technique you've seen used in a class or seen discussed in one of the readings. The important thing is to use us as your students for the exercise, so that we can get the feel of the assignment from the student's point of view. (Also feel free to develop this assignment as a one-hour collaborative presentation with another member of the class. My only caveat on collaboration is that the presentation must clearly show equal contributions by the two collaborators.)

Either before or after the presentation, give us a bare-bones explanation of the context of the exercise (the students with whom you've used it, where in your course sequence it comes, your objectives); if it's a totally new exercise, give us your speculations about the appropriate context. Since 30 minutes is a very short time for an exercise, judge whether we'll need to do any preparation before class. For example, we could do a few minutes' reading during your presentation, but you'll need to hand out the previous week anything requiring more than five minutes' reading. A short story of a few pages, a poem, a scene from a play, a short essay, an excerpt of a novel, a couple of newspaper editorials—selections such as these tend to work well. What we do in the presentation, how we do it, and why you want us to are all up to you. It is my hope, though it is not necessary, that you will link your assignment to the readings/topics for the day that you sign up. Look over the syllabus carefully and try to anticipate where your interests might correspond.

In addition to the assignment itself, you'll write a description before you present and an analysis after you present. Description: a one-page, single-spaced statement (600-700 words) that includes a discussion of the context (the students, the course, where the assignment falls in the course sequence), a step-by-step description of the exercise, and a statement of your goals for the exercise. Include all the elements that you can think of that go behind the implementation of the assignment. Analysis: a one-page, single-spaced statement (600-700 words) that discusses what worked well, why you think it worked, what didn't seem to work, how the students responded, what worked like you expected, what surprised you, and how you might like to modify the assignment next time you use it. **(Sign up for Due date. The description is due the day of the presentation; the analysis is due the next week.)**

Final Paper – Write an 8-10 page double-spaced paper (2750-3250 words) as a summative statement or argument about what you've learned over the semester. Your approach can be based on one of the three possibilities below, but if you have other ideas in mind run them by me for approval. Each option should contain at least 10 sources in the works cited.

1) Teaching Overview: if you choose this option (or think that you may choose this option), first write a short 350-500 word statement about your position as a teacher or prospective teacher around the third week of the semester. The statement should include: why you want to teach literature, your goals, your sense of the issues, your sense of the students' needs, your questions, your doubts, your joys—anything that helps to define you as a teacher or prospective teacher at the present moment. I won't read these, just keep them as a basis for the final paper. Then towards the end of the semester, re-read your statement. How have your thoughts changed? What do you think your strengths as a literature teacher are now? What do you need to work on? Why

do you want to teach literature? What ethos seems to fit your personality? What strategies do you want to shy away from? Lastly, write a three-page statement of your teaching philosophy. These three inventional moments will comprise the three sections of your paper. In addition to being reflective, the paper should be fairly academic: included sources and discussions of concepts that support your ways of thinking about literature and teaching. (This paper will be assessed on its level of reflection and theoretical integration.)

2) Argument Paper on the Teaching of Literature: If you don't want to follow the above format, you can write a standard argumentative paper on any issue related to teaching literature. The rhetoric of teaching, canons or selecting texts, literary theory in the context of teaching, the relationship between writing and the teaching of literature, teaching reading, assessment. Most topics could be applicable, but if you have a question about a possible topic let me know. Just be sure to write the paper as if you were writing for an academic journal. (This paper will be assessed on clear argumentation and theoretical integration.)

3) Mystery: Toward the end of the semester we'll talk about this alternative genre that combines personal experience, cultural context, and critical theory in the form of a collage-like text. It's an approach that combines creative writing, theoretical reflection and connection, and application to daily life. While this assignment might seem attractive, don't be fooled. It requires *a lot* of reflection and theoretical integration even though the form is open-ended. (This paper will be assessed on both creativity and theoretical integration.)

(Due Week 15, Finals Week)

Participation – Attendance, weekly writing (in addition to blogs write 250-350 words to bring to class, make sure it has a title, this can also be posted on your blog), and in class writing all count towards participation. Participation, then, is a mathematically calculated grade, not an "I like you" grade.

Grades

Students in English 610 receive a final grade of A+ (4.0), A (4.0), A- (3.67), B+ (3.33), B (3.0), B- (2.67), C+ (2.33), C (2.0), C- (1.67), D (1.0), or F (0.0).

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|---------------|-------|
| Blog | 10% |
| Visit | 10% |
| Book review | 20% |
| Presentation | 20% |
| Final paper | 30% |
| Participation | 10% |
| | ----- |
| | 100% |

Attendance

Each week we will discuss the readings, give presentations, and sometimes have small writing assignments. Consequently, attendance is extremely important and will count towards

participation grades. If you stop coming to class, it will be your responsibility to drop. Failure to do so will result in an 'F'.

Rewrites

All papers can be rewritten except for the final paper. Each project will have a specific due date and should be turned in on that day. Rewrites can be made within a week of receiving a formal grade. This may or may not result in a significant change in grade. Anything that misses the due date will be considered late. If you know you will have a problem with the due date ahead of time, consult me on a possible alternative, though don't expect it.

Office Hours

I will have office hours in RobA 405D, from 3:00 to 4:30 TR. If you need to speak to me and cannot make these times, then ask me to schedule a time that is convenient for both of us. If for some reason I am not in my office, check bay windows in JC if you need to find me immediately. I check my e-mail several times daily, so this will be the best way to contact me in a hurry if you have a question or problem, especially about what is due that week. The only other option is to call and leave a phone message, but I will not receive it immediately.

Syllabus

This is a tentative schedule by week and day, for assignments, readings, and activities. Tentative means I can vary it as much as seems appropriate. However, plan on sticking fairly close to this outline. I will post all revisions/additions of/to the syllabus on the web page. The updated web version will always override the printable PDF version.

Week 1 (R Jan 22): Introductions – meet in IN 317, set up blogs

Week 2 (R Jan 29): Teaching and English

- WWTTL: intro 1-12, Trimbur 15-22, Moran 34-46, Reither 48-60
- Showalter, Elaine. "Teaching in Public: A Modest Proposal" Pedagogy 1.3 (short)

Suggested:

- TSE: Ch1 English Teachers 1-24

In class ___ write about your experiences being a teacher or being taught, discuss

Week 3 (R Feb 5): Teacher Ethos and Student Authority

- Gregory, Marshall W. "Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Teacherly Ethos" Pedagogy 1.1
- Worsham, Lynn, "No Mere Passing Interest" Pedagogy 1.3 (short)
- Meyer, Sheree. "'Broadly Representative'? The MLA's Approaches to Teaching World Literature Series" Pedagogy 3.1

- Kain, Donna J. "Teacher-Centered versus Student-Centered: Balancing Constraint and Theory in the Composition Classroom" Pedagogy 3.1 (short)
- Palmer, William, "Simple, Surprising, Useful? Three Questions for Judging Teaching Methods" Pedagogy 3.2 (short)
- Gellis, Mark. "Grading with an Attitude" Pedagogy 2.3 (short)
- Wallen, Jeffrey. "We Really Do Not Know How to Disagree with Each Other" Pedagogy 3.2 (short)

In class ___ write about a past or present teacher and describe/discuss his/her ethos, how s/he was presented, what impact it had (bad or good), discuss

Week 4 (R Feb 12): Reading

- WWTTL: Bloom 77-87, Murphy 88-98, Schuster 135-47, George/Blanning 163-76
- Scholes, Robert J. "The Transition to College Reading" Pedagogy 2.2
- Skoblow, Jeffrey. "Reading Fiction/Teaching Fiction/Reading Teaching: A Response" Pedagogy 1.2 (short)

Suggested:

- TSE: Ch2 Reading Literature 25-80 (specifically take a look at sample assignments)

Assignment Presentation 1 ___

Assignment Presentation 2 ___

Week 5 (R Feb 19): Canons

- Gallagher, Susan V. "Contingencies and Intersections: The Formation of Pedagogical Canons" Pedagogy 1.1
- Ruwe, Donelle Rae, "Syllabi Constructions, Imaginary Canons, and the Impact of the Extraliterary" Pedagogy 1.2
- Insko, Jeffrey. "Generational Canons" Pedagogy 3.3
- Drake, George. "Placing the Canon: Literary History and the *Longman Anthology of British Literature*" Pedagogy 1.1 (short)
- Hassan, Salah Dean Assaf. "Canons after 'Postcolonial Studies'" Pedagogy 1.2
- WWTTL: Bishop 121-33

Suggested:

- TSE: Ch3 Choosing Texts 82-132 (see section on the process of choosing texts)

Assignment Presentation 3 ___

Assignment Presentation 4 ___

Week 6 (R Feb 26): Writing for Personal Knowledge

- WWTTL: Peters 148-62, Elbow 193-206, Newkirk 207-16, Lovitt 230-45
- Giuliano, Cheryl Fallon, "The Writing Connection: Composing the Learner's Classroom" Pedagogy 1.2

Suggested:

- TSE: Ch4 Writing 134-212 (see Murray, Elbow)

Assignment Presentation 5 ____

Assignment Presentation 6 ____

Week 7 (R Mar 4): Writing for Critical Literacy – teacher visit due this week

- WWTTL: Greene 177-90, Peterson 261-71, Sommers, Yancey 288-300, Coles 301-10
- Wolfe, Joanna. "A Method for Teaching Invention in the Gateway Literature Class" Pedagogy 3.3

Suggested:

- TSE: Ch4 Writing 134-212 (see Sommers, Carney)

Assignment Presentation 7 ____

Assignment Presentation 8 ____

Spring Break: March 7-14

Week 8 (R Mar 18): Reader-response, Marxism

- Critical Encounters Ch 1-4
- Czarnecki, Kristin. "Postcolonial Theory and the Undergraduate Classroom: Teaching 'The Red Convertible'" Pedagogy 2.1 (short)

Assignment Presentation 9 ____

Assignment Presentation 10 ____

Week 9 (R Mar 25): No Class (CCCC) – work on book reviews this week

Week 10 (R Apr 1): Feminism, Poststructuralism – book review due

- Critical Encounters Ch 5-8
- Joseph, Nancy L. "Metacognition in the Classroom: Examining Theory and Practice" Pedagogy 3.1 (short)

Assignment Presentation 11 ____

Assignment Presentation 12 ____

Week 11 (R Apr 8): Drama (Tale)

- Text Book Ch1
- Zimmerman, Virginia. "Moving Poems: Kinesthetic Learning in the Literature Classroom" Pedagogy 2.3 (short)

Assignment Presentation 13 ____

Assignment Presentation 14 ____

Week 12 (R Apr 15): Poetry (Analogy)

- Text Book Ch2
- LaFemina, Gerry, "Teaching Craft, Teaching Criticism: The Creative Writer in the Literature Class" Pedagogy 3.3 (short)

Assignment Presentation 15 ____

Assignment Presentation 16 ____

Week 13 (R Apr 22): Intertextuality (Theory)

- Text Book Ch3
- Hawk, Byron. "A Rhetoric/Pedagogy of Silences: Sub-version in Paul Kameen's *Writing/Teaching*" Pedagogy 3.3

Assignment Presentation 17 ____

Assignment Presentation 18 ____

Week 14 (R Apr 29): Mystory (Contrast/Target)

- Text Book Ch4

In class ____ review paper proposals/drafts

Week 15: Finals Week – email **final papers** by Monday, May 10