Current Approaches to Composition and Literature

English 3360.201 Spring 2014

M/W 5:30-6:45

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Classroom: OCNR 240

Course Description:

English 3360 is an amalgam of writing workshop, teaching practicum, and composition theory course. The course instructor will focus on contemporary approaches to written discourse in English, including the study of composition and literature. Its purpose is to introduce you to the current research in literacy, writing, and the teaching of writing and literature to the end of helping to prepare you to be a more effective, reflective, and informed language arts teacher in either an elementary, middle, or secondary public school. To this end, we will complicate and question our ideas of literacy and language:

What is literacy?

- In the U.S. today, what does it mean to be literate?
- How can we encourage and develop our students various stages and forms of literacy?
- As teachers, what are our beliefs about literacy, literature, and language, and how do they impact our roles/strategies in the classroom?
- How can we respect the various forms of literacy that students bring to our classrooms, at the same time that we are preparing them for the various cultural, professional, technological, social, and civic discourses that they will need to participate in to be fulfilled members of our society?

We will also build knowledge, materials, tools, and strategies to help you become an informed, confident, reflective teacher of literacy in your future/current position/degree.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students in English 3360 will:
1. Apply contemporary theories of writing and literature pedagogy to design and evaluate classroom materials in accordance with the TEKS.

2. Evaluate K-12 student writing using a variety of response and assessment methods.

3. Write in multiple academic and personal genres to improve their own writing skills.

**Course Goals**

As part of accomplishing these outcomes, students will meet the following goals:

1. identify the complex relations among literacy, learning, and language use.

2. identify the theoretical principles behind local, state, and national standards, and apply them, along with a wide range of professional resources, to curriculum development.

3. explain the ways that contexts for teaching and/or learning are influenced by global and local factors such as: divergent notions of literacy; matters of race, gender, class, economics, technology; cultural and environmental elements; and socio-cognitive development.

4. apply process pedagogy and the workshop model of writing instruction to curriculum development.

5. develop a critical vocabulary for teaching writing and literature at an age-appropriate level.

6. design strategies for teaching writing and literature in a high stakes testing environment.

7. generate and apply appropriate criteria for responding to and assessing student writing.

8. develop effective strategies for integrating technology into the English language arts classroom.

9. articulate the theoretical principles behind the methods that inform one's pedagogy.

10. apply creative writing techniques to write creative works.

Prerequisite: one reading course.

**Texts and Materials:**


A portable storage medium (e.g. flash drive) to save and transport files to and from class.

**Grade Breakdown for High Stakes Writing**

100%-90% = A

90%-80% = B

80%-70% = C

70%-60% = D

60% and below = F

**Grade Distribution**

**High-Stakes Writing Work (Total: 70%)**

High stakes writing will be graded on quality of product, demonstration of knowledge, professionalism. Expectations for quality and correctness are very high. Except for the exams, this involves extensive revision from earlier work.

1. Interview Report (15%): interview a currently practicing teacher about how writing is taught at that grade level and write a three-page report on what you learned (TEKS all levels: Writing/Writing Process, Interviewing techniques, Writing/Expository & Procedural texts)

2. Writing developed from notebook (15%): Creative writing piece developed from low stakes notebook. Each student will choose writing from his/her notebook to develop into a finished product for an audience and published in our Blackboard online E book. You may also decide to go public and include your writing in the National Gallery of Writing Multiple drafts are required for this writing. (TEKS all levels: Writing/Writing Process; Writing/Literary texts)

3. Research essay (20%): Research essay is based on a topic developed from our low stakes writing about various assigned NCTE discussion groups and/or related readings. Discussion groups can be found at NCTE Connected Communities (TEKS all levels: Writing/Writing Process; Writing/Persuasive Texts; all Research TEKS)

4. Take Home Final Exam based on Workshop In-service Outline (10%): In addition to practicing the writing process through your notebook and finished product for an audience, you will have an opportunity to develop an in-service workshop for teachers based on what you learned through this writing process. With that in mind, you will be required to prepare a three page detailed outline of a two hour in-service workshop that you might facilitate for a group of teachers based on some of the concepts you learned through your class readings as well as
experiences with the writer's notebook and finished product. The workshop should be practical; it should show how your ideas developed through what you've learned in this class and how your experiential knowledge through your writing process can benefit teachers as writers. Further information will be provided in class.

**Low-Stakes Writing (Total: 30%)**

Work graded mostly on completeness (exceptions will be noted on individual assignments). Offers students the opportunity to explore ideas, practice techniques, and develop writing skills in a safe, relatively judgment-free context. Although the work in the low-stakes category does not have to be very polished, students are expected to produce a large quantity of writing. Some (although not all) will be written in class. Topics for high-stakes writing assignments will mostly develop out of low-stakes writings.

1. In-class work: (10%) Includes individual, group activities, response to NCTE discussion groups and readings; required participation on workshop days; peer editing (TEKS all levels: Writing/Writing Process; Collaboration in writing/responding)

2. Writer's Notebook: (5%) In class and out-of-class writings that will lead to the high stakes writing developed from notebook. (TEKS all levels: Writing/Writing Process; Writing/Literary texts)

3. Peer Evaluations: (5%) With every major assignment, class members will participate in responding to peers’ drafts. Students will be evaluated by their peers and by the professor on how well they respond to peers’ drafts. Handouts will be provided on how to respond as peers.

4. Quizzes based on assigned readings (10%).

5. Responding to Student Writing: (10%) Students will practice responding to one sample essay at a particular grade level of choice using principles learned in class. We will watch a series of videos from various expert teachers of writing who conference with students. Students will then simulate a student conference based on the selected sample student essay. The simulation will include a brief biography of the student, writing conference log describing previous conferences with the student on this particular essay highlighting writing strengths and challenges, and various writing goals for this student to improve his/her writing. Each student will write a reflective paper explaining his/her theory of response and how it was put into practice. (TEKS all levels: Writing/Writing Process, Writing/Expository & Procedural texts)

Submitting assignments: Some final drafts of the major assignments must be submitted through Blackboard. I will inform you of this in advance.

**About the TExES Exam**

Do not rush into the professional development segment of your career by attempting to take your TExES certification exams too soon. The College of Education can give you advice on when to take your professional development exams and will be your main source of information about the
TExES if you are working toward EC-4 certification. For those of you who will be taking the English Language Arts & Reading (ELAR) 4-8 or 8-12, please do the following:

- finish at least 80% of the course work in the major before attempting the ELAR TExES exam.
- Make an appointment to see the English department TExES coordinator if you have not done so. Contact Dr. Sharon Talley at 825-3265 or Sharon.Talley@tamucc.edu. She controls registration for the exam and the mandatory review sessions.
- Review the study guide carefully. Click here to obtain TExES Study Guides.
- Attend at least one TExES review session, preferably two. Try to attend one about a year before you plan to take the exam, then again right before your exam. Review sessions usually take place the Saturday one week before the exam. Dates and times will be announced in class.

**Reminder to English Majors**

As part of the English undergraduate capstone course (ENGL 4351), all English majors are required to submit a portfolio of writings in different discourse genres that they have completed for their college classes. To help you prepare for this assignment, you should keep a copy of all essays, research papers, literary analyses, creative and report writing, etc., so that you will have an ample selection from which to choose when the portfolio comes due.

**Course Policies:**

**Attendance/Participation**

As an active participant, teacher, and professional you are expected to attend every class on time. Attendance is a crucial part of a class grounded in liberatory learning and teaching that necessitates an active engagement in classroom discussions, group activities, and peer editing of papers as well as other writing activities. You are a valuable contributor in this classroom, and a responsible contributor and teacher must be in consistent attendance. The work we will do during class is crucial to your understanding of the material and your success in the course. When a student is frequently absent, this requires the teacher to frequently explain the assignments and missed activities to the student and can hinder the effectiveness of group activities that require peer feedback. Consequently, the student who is frequently absent creates an unnecessary burden for both the teacher and their peers. Frequent absences will not fare well for your grade in that you will miss assignment explanations, handouts, in class activities, group work, and course grade penalties as listed below. Most of all, frequent absences hurt your future K-12 students when you will miss valuable information and peer interactions that you will need for becoming the best writing teacher you can be for them. If you plan on being absent from my class, just as in the workplace, you will need to inform me and your group members (if you are working on an assignment for that day together) via e-mail or phone once you know that you will not be able to attend class. This is what a teacher is expected to do when he/she is absent. If you do not do this, you will not be able to make up any in-class assignments for that day or turn in anything that is due on that day thereby receiving a late penalty for your work. To be considered present,
must be on time (unless there are extenuating circumstances that meet with my approval), participate in all class activities, and remain in class for the entire period. Leaving early, coming in significantly late, taking noticeable breaks in the middle of class, or not fully participating (for example frequent texting and facebooking, studying for other classes, nonrelated class computer use, etc.) during in-class work will result in zero credit for any in-class work that day.

**Deadlines**

As a teacher, you must meet the required deadlines. Late submissions will not be accepted unless there are extenuating circumstances that meet with my approval and are in writing. Please write the reasons for your late submission in an e-mail no later than the due date of the assignment. Such requirements will better prepare you for the deadline responsibilities that you will have in your classroom and to various co-workers and school administrators. I treat this class as if it is a professional educational workplace, and I expect you to be a professional. What is expected of you at your place of employment as a future teacher is what I expect of you in class.

**Discussions**

You must play an active role in classroom discussions and group activities. Dialogue (whether written or verbal) is a vital part of the learning process for this class.

**In Class Conduct**

Please refrain from using your computers for unrelated work during class. I will ask everyone to put their cell phones away at the beginning of class for the duration of class. If you do need to have your cell phone on during class for emergency purposes, you will need to notify me before class begins.

**In Class Writing Time Conduct and Accommodations**

Some students are easily distracted, so please do not talk during our private designated times of writing. Likewise, if you write better with some background noise, you can bring music headsets for our class writing times. We should only be concentrating on our writing during these times.

**University Policies**

**Grade Appeal Process**

As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the
process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Website at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

Notice to Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom, or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance.

Academic Advising

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

The University will not tolerate plagiarism or any other form of intellectual/academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is a serious violation of departmental and University policies, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Regardless, work that is turned in for the course that is plagiarized will be failed. If you are unsure about your use of sources, please consult with me or visit the writing center (in the TLC, in the Glasscock building) for advice on source documentation BEFORE the item is due. For this course, you must use either MLA or APA citation style. Any grammar handbook and many web sites have directions on correct citation.

Acceptance of Diversity We are the most diverse campus, in terms of racial identity, in the Texas A&M system. This means that we are all meeting and working with people who are different from ourselves in terms of their identities: whether that is defined by their race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, and/or religion. Respecting and accepting difference is vital to your success in this class, on this campus, as a future teacher in your own classroom, and in the global community.
Tentative Class Plans

Week One

Introduction to the course and completion of the pretest in class. Name Game Activity and First Writing Activity (page 50 of *Inside Out*). Review Blackboard 9.1 in class. Introduction to NCTE Discussion Group site.

Week Two

Read xv to 20 and Chapter 3 in *Inside Out*. Quiz on readings. Review NCTE standards and Teacher Burn-out article. Discussion posting on Teacher Burn-out article and New Teachers NCTE Discussion Group. Review Interview Assignment and Writer’s Notebook and Writing Developed from Notebook Assignment.

Week Three –


Week Four –

Read the 2009-10 ELA [http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter110/index.html|TEKS]] for your preferred grade level. Pay close attention to those that deal with writing. Elementary level: Note that you must scroll down to subchapter 110.10 to find the 2009-10 version. Review discussions in NCTE Teaching Writing Group Discussions. Read 1-27 in *The Writing Workshop* and 67-78 and 333-334 in *Inside Out*. Quiz on Readings. Conduct interviews this week. Writer’s Notebook entry. In-class work based on readings.

Week Five –

Read your assigned chapter from Lucy Calkins, *The Art of Teaching Writing*. Review the ELA TEKS for the grade level(s) represented in your assigned chapters. Interview writing workshop. Writer’s Notebook entry. Read 231-249 in *The Writing Workshop*. Review NCTE Adolescent Literacy and Middle
Level Teaching Community Discussion Groups. Writer’s Notebook Entry. In-class work based on readings.

Week Six –

Week Seven
Final draft of interview report due. Read 167-185 in Inside Out and responding to student writing handouts. Read 249-278 in Inside Out. Quiz on Readings. Review NCTE Read-Write-Think Creative Writing lesson plans and Read-Write-Think Discussion Group. Review Calkins videos on conferencing with students. In-class work based on readings.

Week Eight
Read 142-146 in On Writing Well and 139-166 in Inside Out and 155-171 in The Writing Workshop. Read peer editing handouts. Quiz on readings. Responding to Student Writing simulation workshop. Writing Developed from Notebook topic paragraph due and notebook entry based on topic paragraph. In-class work based on readings.

Week Nine
Read 211-230 in The Writing Workshop and 219-248 in Inside Out. Quiz on Readings. Review MS Word tracking for online peer editing. Peer Editing of Responding to Student Assignment (first draft and second draft).

Week Ten
Responding to Student Writing assignment due. Writing workshops on Writing Developed from Notebook Assignment. Bring your writing each time to class to show me your progress. Conferences in my office for Writing
Developed from Notebook (bring draft to conference). Review Research Essay guidelines.

**Week Eleven**


**Week Twelve**


**Week Thirteen**

Read pages 256-274 in previous edition of *Inside Out* (handout) and locate resources on NCTE website. In-class work based on readings and writing workshop.

**Week Fourteen**


**Week Fifteen**

Read pages 49-91 in *On Writing Well*. Peer editing workshop on second draft of Research Essay. In-class work on readings. **Final Exam Due.**

**Week Sixteen**

Peer Editing workshop on third draft of Research Essay. Set up conference times for students who wish to meet with me on Research Essay during Week sixteen.

**Research Essay due on Final Exam date (to be announced)**