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Course Content

This course is designed to introduce you to issues and pedagogical methods in the teaching of writing and language. In this course, you will critically engage cases and models of teaching in order to extend your understanding of secondary English instruction and begin developing your skills as an English teacher. By supporting you as you examine writing and language instruction from different points of view, our goal is to help you develop a personal philosophy of teaching English that is informed by theory and generated by interpreting your own practice and the practice of others.

The design of TE 401 centers on secondary writing instruction. We will utilize case studies to examine the various components of effective writing instruction: planning and sequencing instruction from gateway activities through assessment, genre and discourse of writing tasks, models of writing processes, models for responding to student writing, effective uses of rubrics, and more.

You will become familiar with current conceptual frameworks that are shaping English education, including but not limited to developments in critical and cultural studies. Teaching practice is never neutral; therefore, issues of power and ideology will be woven into discussions of course content throughout the semester. Other important goals of this course are:

- To help pre-service teachers develop the capacity to make flexible, appropriate decisions in the classroom
- To help pre-service teachers design instruction for diverse students in a range of social contexts in ways that empower them and expand their potential lives
- To help pre-service teachers continue developing as professionals beyond the program of teacher education.

Required Texts

- TE 401 Coursepack (available at Budget Printing, which is located in the Trowbridge Shopping Plaza, at the corner of Harrison Road and Trowbridge Road.)

Grading

Grades are criterion-referenced. That is, grades will be assigned based on the percent of the total possible points that you receive on the examinations and the assignments [4.0 > 95%, 3.5 > 85%, 3.0 > 80%, 2.5 > 75%, 2.0 > 70%]. Points are distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Laboratory (pass/fail)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Analyses/Daily Assignments (pass/fail)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Inquiry Project</td>
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<td>Teaching Philosophy Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis, Discussion, and Commentary Project</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final—Video Self-Study Portfolio</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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Participation: You will spend much of the next two years together with your classmates sharing ideas, theories, advice, and experiences. You are a valuable resource for your peers, and the stronger the community we build in this class, the richer the experiences we will have here. No percentage value has been assigned to class participation. However, if a student’s final average falls in between grades (for example between a 3.0 and a 3.5) the following criteria will be used to determine the final grade.

a) Clear evidence that you have read the weekly readings (i.e. productive, consistent participation in discussions, completion of assignments)
b) Completion of tasks that support the work in seminar (for example, lab and field tasks)
c) Mentor Teacher evaluation reports
d) Active and supportive listening in the classroom and offering constructive feedback to peers and instructors

Assessments

English Teaching Laboratory:
One day each week (Wednesday for section 15, Thursday for section 16), you will practice teaching in a laboratory setting with your peers. You will receive a separate syllabus for this section of the course that describes specific tasks. The teaching lab is a central component of TE 401, and a significant amount of your coursework will revolve around your activities in this setting. You will receive a grade of pass/fail in the teaching lab based on a checklist of criteria; the lab is worth 10% of your overall grade for TE 401.

Case Analyses/Daily Assignments:
As a part of your daily activities in the TE 401 seminar, you will engage in analyses of a variety of teaching cases. Analyses will revolve around four overlapping “lenses” for viewing teaching that will be central to your study for the next two years: lesson coherence, content representation, learner accommodation, and craft. Each case will focus on a specific issue, pedagogical approach, or skill that you will need to understand in order to teach effectively. These cases are also designed to improve your abilities of observation and analysis with regard to your own teaching and the teaching of others. Your work will include observation and discussion of real and fictional video teaching samples; reading and discussion of narrative teaching episodes; analysis of model unit and lesson plans; assessing and analyzing student writing samples; and evaluating assessment instruments for a variety of purposes. You may be asked to respond to cases verbally, anticipating and exploring the potential consequences of different decisions. At other times, you will incorporate your understanding of course readings, discussions, and experiences to produce both brief and extended written analyses.

These activities will involve both independent and group work. They will be used as texts for discussion in the seminar. Specific instructions and deadlines will be included for dealing with each case. Typically, these assignments will be assigned so that they can be completed adequately in the period between two class meetings. Case Analyses and other daily activities are worth 10% of your overall grade for TE 401 and will be assessed on a pass/fail basis using a checklist rubric.

Field Inquiry Project:
As part of your field placement, you will be asked to conduct research on a question or issue related to secondary writing instruction. This inquiry project is worth 20% of your overall course grade; you will be provided with a rubric that states the criteria for your assessment. The question or issue that you choose to research can relate to your own practice in the classroom or another phenomenon or activity that interests you. Whichever direction you choose to take, you must receive approval from one of your instructors and your mentor teacher prior to conducting your research. This “inquiry project” will include the following components:

1. Design (5 points)
   It is essential to design a study that allows you to ask a focused question about writing instruction and gives you ways to go about answering that question. The following items should be included in your research design:
   • Research Question: You should begin writing your design by stating a coherent and accessible research question. You should also include a paragraph or two, which will provide a rationale for studying your question.
   • Context: You should provide an overview of the context in which you are researching. In this section, you will describe your classroom demographics and give necessary background information about the students, the teacher and the school.
   • Methods: In this section, you will tell about how you intend to conduct your research. What kinds of data will you collect? For what purposes? How will the data be collected? How will data be analyzed? How will data be reported? (*The design component is due in class on Monday, October 7, 2002.)
2. Preliminary Reports (5 pts)

Three preliminary reports are required as part of your field inquiry project. Because a significant portion of your learning will come this semester from your field placement via your mentor teacher, we want to provide a forum to initiate and document this learning. We also want you to talk with a student or group of students about their experiences as writers and students in writing classes. Finally, we want you to analyze some classroom artifacts (e.g. lesson plans, students completed writing assignments, textbooks, etc.).

- Preliminary Report #1: Find time to talk with your mentor teacher for at least 15-20 minutes. You should develop questions specific to your area of research. Once you have spoken with your mentor teacher, write a 1-2 page report based on the data. How do the data help you answer your research question? What other information is needed to help you answer your research question? (*The first preliminary report is due in class on Monday, October 21, 2002.)

- Preliminary Report #2: Find time to talk with a student or group of students for at least 15-20 minutes. You should develop questions specific to your area of research. Once you have spoken with the student(s), write a 1-2 page report based on the data. How do the data help you answer your research question? What other information is needed to help you answer your research question? (*The first preliminary report is due in class on Monday, November 4, 2002.)

- Preliminary Report #3: Collect some classroom artifacts (teacher’s writing lesson plans, students’ texts, textbooks, etc), and analyze these based on your research question. Once you have conducted your analysis, write a 1-2 page report based on the data. How do the data help you answer your research question? How does all of the data that you have collected help you to answer your research question? (*The first preliminary report is due in class on Monday, November 18, 2002.)

3. Field Inquiry Report (10 pts)

The field inquiry report is a formal essay. It should include all of the elements of the “design” and should synthesize and interpret the data collected for the preliminary reports. This paper should be about 1,500 words typed written. The field inquiry report is due Monday, December 2, 2002.

Teaching Philosophy Project:

Effective English teachers understand the reasoning behind the choices they make in the classroom. A primary component of this course involves the consideration of purposes for teaching writing and language in the Secondary English classroom, as well as an examination of the personal orientations and assumptions teachers use to determine those purposes. You will engage in an ongoing process of drafting and revising philosophy statements in order to articulate and examine your own purposes, orientations, and assumptions about English teaching. To do this, you will be asked to examine various national and state frameworks (i.e. National Board, INTASC, NCTE, Michigan Content Standards) in order to consider multiple definitions of quality composition and language teaching. You will be asked to reflect on and respond to course readings and discussions of theory, research, and philosophy in order to clarify your own positions and reasoning. Finally, you will also be challenged to critically examine and develop your own personal beliefs about teaching as well as the beliefs of others.

You will be periodically assigned to write brief philosophy statements with regard to the texts mentioned above (See course schedule for specific dates). You will receive feedback on your statements and revise them as you develop your understanding based on learning in the course. Ultimately, you will craft your own definition of an ideal composition/language teacher using this collection of statements. Your definition will be referred to and re-crafted throughout the semester. These drafts will not be graded, but you will receive detailed feedback for use during revision and discussion. A final draft that integrates all of these statements is due on Wednesday, November 13. This final draft is worth 20% of your overall course grade, and will be assessed using a rubric provided to you in advance.

Analysis, Discussion, and Commentary Project:

This multi-step project will provide you with an opportunity to analyze your own teaching through multi-media, discussion, and a written commentary. Your analysis will stem from a self-selected video of your own teaching from the TE 401 lab; a discussion of that video with your peers, which will also be digitally recorded; and a written commentary on the lesson. If completed thoughtfully, this task should build upon the analyses of teaching that take place in the lab, connect your lab experiences with the TE 401 seminar, and develop your ability to analyze and learn from your own teaching. Your work on this project should also further your ability to use the four lenses for analysis and reflection that are central to the English Education Program.

You will receive a complete description of this assignment and a copy of the rubric that will be used for assessment. Students will sign up in advance for dates on which they will lead discussions. The Analysis, Discussion, and Commentary Project is worth 20% of your overall grade for TE 401.
Video Self-Study Portfolio:
Good teaching is difficult because it is an extraordinarily complex task. As novice teachers, you already have a great deal of personal experience and knowledge about teaching. However, research has shown that there are marked differences in the ways that beginners and experts observe and think about teaching. In part, experts are better able to see relationships across classroom components; plan more carefully and appropriately for a specific group of students; think and behave flexibly during the act of teaching; and solve problems more creatively. High levels of expertise can only result from experience. However, we will operate on the assumption that it is possible to accelerate the development of beginning teachers and help them gain expertise more quickly. One way of speeding your own development is to use video technology in the study of your own teaching.

Portfolios and video are increasingly used to assess quality teaching, as is evidenced by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the process of National Board certification. Your final assignment in this course requires you to produce a video movie portfolio representing your learning and development as a teacher. The movie will be based on clips gathered from your laboratory teaching videos, which will be recorded and provided to you on a CD-ROM disk throughout the semester. You will include commentary for each of these clips that explains their significance based on a set of lenses for analysis and reflection of teaching, and you may also include samples of your lesson planning and reflective writing to show how your thinking and teaching have evolved across the semester.

Instructions and equipment for producing digital video movies will be provided for you. Two days per week (Wednesdays from 6-9 pm and Thursdays from 7-9 pm), a computer lab will be reserved for your use in the evenings and an assistant will be present to help you extract and record clips from your lab videos. This will be an ongoing project that should not demand intense effort at the end of the semester. Full instructions and a rubric will be provided for you well in advance of the due date. The video self-study portfolio project is worth 20% of your overall grade for TE 401, and will be assessed using a focused holistic rubric provided to you in advance.

Lenses for Analysis and Reflection

The ability to understand current practice and use that understanding for planning and implementing classroom instruction is fundamental to the preservice teacher’s continuing professional development. Analyzing and reflecting upon examples of teaching—their own and others’—is a recurrent feature of this program. To assist in such analysis and reflection, the English Education Program emphasizes four lenses through which students view their own and others’ teaching. The lenses aid in focusing on pedagogical issues, incorporate elements of critical pedagogy, and draw on the other program standards. In addition to providing a frame for seeing teaching, these lenses are used by university instructors, collaborating teachers, and field instructors to view and assess pre-service teachers’ work in courses, labs, field experiences, and the internship year. The lenses are lesson coherence, content representation, learner accommodation, and craft.

Lesson Coherence: Effective English teachers need to know how to use a variety of approaches in order to design and sequence instruction that supports literacy learning for all students. Lesson coherence refers to the logic of a teacher’s presentation of lesson materials and activities. Understanding of lesson coherence involves the following:

1. Knowledge about the elements of instructional design such as goals/objectives, schema activators, explanation formats, discussion formats, questionning techniques, modeling/practice activities, and assessments
2. Ability to identify meaningful literacy goals for students based on their abilities, cultures, and backgrounds, the mandates of a school curriculum, the Michigan Content Standards, and/or national literacy standards
3. Ability to anticipate and analyze students’ performance on literary tasks (patterns in students’ control of surface language features, patterns of students’ language use and thinking in writing tasks) in order to make informed curricular decisions and instructional actions
4. Ability to plan a variety of assessment tools and results (e.g., essay tests, objective tests, performance activities, etc.) to inform curricular decisions and instructional actions
5. Ability to sequence and scaffold a related set of instructional tasks coherently and appropriately within a lesson

Content Representation: Preservice teachers are not expected to know every aspect of the discipline; however they should know enough about language, literature, composition, and media to apply that knowledge in the representation of concepts during teaching. They should be able to represent subject matter in a variety of ways that are accurate, clear, and appropriate for specific age groups and/or cultural contexts. Content representation refers to the accurate and appropriate portrayal of content in a specific classroom
Understanding of content representation involves the following:

1. Knowledge about the central concepts, content, skills, tools of inquiry, and structure of English
2. Knowledge about general patterns of human development and learning theories, particularly with regard to literacy learning in adolescence
3. Ability to use multiple and various representations of content such as metaphors, analogies, models, demonstrations, and examples
4. Respect for diverse social and cultural backgrounds, including an awareness of race, gender, ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation
5. Proficiency in the use of oral and written language for different purposes and different social contexts
6. Ability to promote cultural awareness and understanding, take into account students’ personal backgrounds and experiences, and build on prior learning

**Learner Accommodation:** The ability to use knowledge about learners’ abilities and backgrounds during instruction is important in order to meet the needs of all students. Learner accommodation refers to the teacher’s ability to assess understanding and engagement during a lesson and then respond by adapting to the needs of students. Understanding of learner accommodation involves the following:

1. Ability to draw on content knowledge during teaching in order to support instructional decisions and actions
2. Ability to shift, adapt, or alter lesson goals and content based on assessment of student background knowledge, cultural experience, or conceptual understanding during teaching
3. Ability to incorporate and value student responses based on awareness and respect for race, gender, ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation during a lesson
4. Flexibility to deviate from lesson plans in order to seize educational opportunities when they arise in the context of a lesson
5. Ability to use a variety of assessment tools and results (e.g., essay tests, objective tests, performance activities, etc.) to inform curricular decisions and instructional actions

**Craft:** Effective English teachers need to be able to implement pedagogy using appropriate procedural knowledge and effective communications skills. Craft refers to a teacher’s use of interpersonal and group communications skills in the context of teaching to achieve instructional goals and manage classroom activity. It includes the teacher’s ability to maintain instruction flow, initiate smooth transitions in a lesson, utilize routines, and deal with student behavior effectively and appropriately. Understanding of craft involves the following:

1. Ability to use voice, movement, gesture, and facial expression in a variety of ways to achieve goals
2. Knowledge of classroom management techniques and strategies such as the use of routines and spatial arrangements
3. Knowledge of cooperative learning and grouping strategies
4. Knowledge of questioning and response techniques
5. Ability to use proximity and pacing to adjust or maintain classroom management and instructional flow
6. Sensitivity to social, cultural, and ethnic issues related to the use of voice, gesture, movement, facial expression, eye contact, proximity, pacing, and adult-child interaction that affect classroom communication.

**Professional Standards**

In order to proceed to the internship, you must meet the professional criteria below in the judgment of your course instructors and your mentor teacher. If you are not meeting these criteria, you will be notified and given a chance to correct any problems. Following is a description of the criteria for these professional standards:

Reliability and Responsibility: Prospective interns must be present and on time for professional commitments, including classes, teaching labs, and field experiences. They must meet deadlines for course assignments and program requirements. A pattern of absences, tardiness, and/or failure to meet deadlines is not acceptable. Dishonesty regarding any requirement is not acceptable.

Communication Skills and Social Relationships: Prospective interns must demonstrate the ability to interact appropriately with instructors or peers. They must be able to accept constructive feedback in a professional manner, and observe appropriate social boundaries with students, peers, instructors, and mentor teachers.

Comfort with and Concern for the Learning of all Children: Prospective interns must be able to interact with children in socially
appropriate, respectable, and responsible ways. Prospective interns must behave courteously, fairly, and professionally with people of different genders, races, cultures, sexual preferences, and social backgrounds. Disrespect toward others in any way is not acceptable.

**Attendance**

Attendance is important. You are expected to attend all seminars, laboratories, and field placements, and a pattern of absence or tardiness in or across any of these components will affect your final grade. More than two (2) absences in or across any course components may be deemed a pattern by the instructor. You will be notified by the instructor of any concerns and given an opportunity to address them prior to a reduction in your grade.

If you know ahead of time that you are going to miss a class, contact your instructor by phone. If a serious illness strikes you more suddenly, call and leave a message on voicemail. It is your responsibility to inquire about handouts, announcements, and other information distributed during your absence.

In your field placement, make a plan with your Mentor Teacher for contacting him/her when you are going to miss a visit, and always arrange to make up any absences. You will be in your field placement 4 hours per week from October through the end of the semester.

**Technology Requirements**

All students preparing to be certified as English teachers are required by the state of Michigan to demonstrate specific technological skills. We have designed assignments for TE 401 that will allow you to meet your technology requirements in a productive, useful manner. While we will provide minimal help in class to learn what you need to complete these assignments, if you need additional assistance you should consult either the Technology Center in Erickson Hall (Room 133) or the Writing Center in Bessey Hall. Both employ tech-guides to help students with everything from basic word processing to sending electronic attachments to web page design.

For more information about Team Four (Secondary Education) at MSU, MTTC assessment dates, program standards, etc., visit the Team Four Website at [http://ed-web2.educ.msu.edu/team4/](http://ed-web2.educ.msu.edu/team4/).