ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY
ENG 296, sections 2 and 5
Fall 2006

Time: T/Th 11:00-12:15 and 3:35-4:50
Rooms: STV 308, STV 410

Instructor: Dr. Paula Ressler
Office: 323C STV
Phone: 309-438-7798
E-mail: pressle@ilstu.edu
Office hours: T/Th 9:30-10:30 and by appointment

SYLLABUS

A course syllabus, at its best, is a fluid document that is subject to change depending upon students’ learning needs. It can be compared to a stream or river that meanders or flows gently in ordinary circumstances, but which can dry up during droughts and overflow its banks during storms. We will be making adjustments to the syllabus during the semester by adding assignments, which may become necessary, or deleting assignments when the ground becomes saturated. Leila Christenbury, in her book, Making the Journey, mentions “flexibility” as a trait of a good teacher (39). This semester, you might want to consider how much or how little flexibility you are comfortable with and how you may become more at ease with unanticipated events and students’ unfolding learning needs as time goes on.

Rationale

In your methods course this semester, you will begin to develop your English teacher persona and what it means to be a teacher that supports the learning of all students. Whether teaching in racially or economically homogeneous communities, teachers must prepare all students for succeeding and thriving in a multicultural, multiethnic world rich in all forms of diversity.

Methods courses are designed to help you link general educational theories with theories and practices based on high quality research in the teaching of a discipline, in this case English, some of which may be new to you. Some of what you learn may seem contradictory to what you experienced as a student, what you see practiced in schools you have observed or will be observing, or what you might have learned in other courses. I view such dissonances as learning opportunities in which to reflect on what is most important to us and to our students.

In some ways this course may not give you everything you may want or think you will need as a new teacher. There are no formulas that tell you what to do from day 1 to day 120. What you can expect from this course, however, is to learn something about how to integrate ideas and theories based on research about teaching and learning in English language arts classrooms, with tools you can draw on that will help you make the myriad decisions a teacher continually makes.
ENG 296 will focus on inquiry-based teaching integrating the teaching of literature with the teaching of writing. It will emphasize constructivist methods of teaching and learning and assessment practices that help students connect what they are learning to their lives, linking old knowledge to new.

You will learn methods for:

- conducting meaningful discussions in small and large groups
- guiding small group work and literature circles
- using guided reading practices to improve adolescent literacy
- creating authentic assignments and assessments
- creating lessons that have goals and that build upon one another
- emphasizing reader response literary theory and process writing practices
- teaching language skills that help students play with language and learn about its versatility, subtleties, and constraints
- using classroom drama to engage students in meaning and deepen comprehension

In addition to the methods and general pedagogical approaches mentioned above, ENG 296 also emphasizes teaching for social justice, or the practice of teaching to help empower students to become activists to create a more just society and world. We will plan lessons and curriculum that look at big questions. We will critically examine texts looking at inequities of power, and will explore how issues of race, ethnicity, language, gender, sexuality, ability, and social class affect us, our students, our classrooms, and the world.

**Learning through Doing**

In class, you will practice introducing lessons and leading discussions about literature and writing. You will reflect on teaching in inclusive settings, and practice creating respectful multicultural curricula and classroom environments that provide learning opportunities for all students. You will be learning a great deal from one another during the semester demonstrating the importance of peer feedback and examining strategies for conducting effective group work. You will also practice integrating arts such as drama into your teaching repertoire as a way to help students visualize literature and explore character and motivation deeply, and as a way to engage otherwise reluctant readers and writers in becoming readers and writers as an important way to learn more about themselves and others. Everything we do in this classroom can serve as a model for what you might do in your own classrooms.

**Texts**

This semester we will work with a variety of genres and a wide range of literature emphasizing social justice. We will incorporate canonical with non-canonical texts and with young adult literature and current events. We will focus on what students can gain from pairing texts and working with multiple viewpoints. Also, we will examine writing from the viewpoint of how writers get across meaning, write for audiences and authentic purposes, and use rhetorical skills effectively. (See list of texts at end of syllabus.)
Clinical Experiences
For this methods course you are required to complete 10 hours of clinical experiences. During these clinical hours, ideally you will teach one-two classes that incorporate the teaching of literature with the teaching of writing. What you can do will depend upon the setting in which you are placed. Some of these hours should also be spent engaging in a variety of activities, i.e., team teaching, tutoring, facilitating small groups, grading and record keeping, and observing classes of other teachers. Any observations you do this semester will be active and reflective and will focus on specific ways in which teaching and learning in literacy environments take place.

Professional Growth
To meet the state requirement for professional growth, you may also accumulate up to 4 of your clinical hours for ENG 296 through attending the Illinois Association of Teachers of English (IATE) or the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) conferences. All methods students are required to join IATE, free to students, and NCTE, which has a low membership rate for students.

Classroom Community
To gain the most benefit from this course, we will need to establish a classroom community that is safe enough in which to take academic risks. Such communities are complex and require that everyone engage in the process of trying to make this happen. People may disagree with one another from time to time, but will engage in collegial and respectful discourse around agreements and disagreements. We will engage in a variety of community building activities throughout the semester that you will be able to adapt for use in your own English classes.

Attendance is a key factor in creating an active learning community. You will be an important member of a large classroom community and various small groups. Your peers will be depending upon you for the development of their work and you will be depending upon them for yours. When absent, you are responsible for finding someone in the class who can fill you in on what you have missed and what assignments may be due. Since we are working with a flexible syllabus, you cannot count on assignments remaining the same as on the syllabus. They will change if and when an academic need arises.

If you must be absent, please send an E-mail or leave a message on my office phone in advance, or right after you have to miss a class. Please do not come to class if you have a cold or flu (actively coughing and sneezing) out of sensitivity to people who may have compromised immune systems or who simply do not wish to get sick. Although I will be flexible in case of emergencies, in general, your grade will be negatively affected if you miss classes without adequate reason or documentation, come late frequently, or consistently complete assignments late. If something happens that forces you to miss a number of class—sometimes things happen that are out of our control—you should consider officially withdrawing from the course. There is really no way to make up all the work you might miss in this class. If you miss planned activities for the program, miss school without valid excuses or permission, or leave seminars early without valid reason, expect that your grade will be lowered. Your professional readiness
to teach includes taking responsibility for contacting someone in the class if you are absent to find out what was covered and if anything is due for the following class.

**Professional Expectations**

In this important time while you are making the transition between being a student and being a teacher, you also are expected to exhibit dispositions and behaviors considered standard for the profession. This includes being on time and present in school and classes except when you are ill or have serious emergencies. As a teacher you are expected to always do your best work; expect your students to do theirs; and keep learning yourself, which includes keeping up with the latest and best research in the field.

In addition, you will be developing ethics and relationships appropriate to the profession. There is no room for unethical behaviors in methods classes or student teaching. Lying, or making up excuses for not being where you are supposed to be, or not completing your work is not acceptable. Your relationships with your peers, teachers, cooperating teachers, school administrators, parents, and students need to meet high ethical standards as well.

Another professional guideline to remember is to always back up your work and prepare what is due in a timely fashion to enable you to manage mishaps or malfunctions. This is something you must teach your own students how to do as well.

**Assessment**

Although I find that percentage formulas for grades do not always work, in general your grade for the course will be based upon the following formula. Formal written work, including lesson plans and your final portfolio for the course will count as 50% of your grade. Your journals, reflections, other informal writing, participation in class, presentations, and large and small group work will count for the other 50%. Together, we will be creating the guidelines or scaffolding you will need to complete each significant assignment. In other words, your final grade for the course will reflect the work you have done throughout and how you have synthesized what you have learned.

Assessment will be ongoing, not just a final evaluation you receive at the end of the course. You, your peers, and I will be assessing your work continually as a way to help you develop as a learner and a teacher, and to emphasize the importance of authentic assessment and intrinsic motivation in the learning process. You also will need to take my responses to your work into consideration and will do this by responding to any questions I have or suggestions I make regarding your work. In some cases, I also will require you to revise an assignment.

**Assignments**

Please submit 2 copies of each assignment to me. As a teacher researcher, I keep copies of student work to reflect on as a way to improve my own teaching. You also will be asked to voluntarily participate in research I may publish, which might involve quoting from some of your assignments. In that case, I would remove your name and protect your identity. I may also ask your permission, at times, to share examples of your work with future students if I think they would benefit from what you wrote or learned, again, without naming you.
Plagiarism

Although the term plagiarism is often misused, willful use of someone else’s text without citation is considered a breach of academic ethics. Presenting the same paper for two different courses without permission from both instructors is also considered unethical. Students who willfully plagiarize should expect to fail the paper or, under extreme circumstances, fail the course. Please read the section on academic integrity in the ISU Code of Student Conduct at http://www.crr.ilstu.edu/downloads/Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf. For further information, read the Writing Program Administrator’s “Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices,” which can be found at http://wpacouncil.org/node/9. Guidelines on plagiarism also apply to lesson plans and curricula you find on the Internet or through other sources. If you use something you find on the Internet, please cite the exact source (use MLA guidelines for Internet citations) and discuss how you might adapt it for your particular needs and students.

Disability Accomodations.

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability should contact Disability Concerns at 350 Fell Hall, 438-5853 (voice), 438-8620 (TDD), 309-438-7713 (fax), web site: www.ilstu.edu/depts/disabilityconcerns.
ENG 296, COURSE TEXTS, Fall 2006
Instructor: Paula Ressler


- *The Expanding Canon*, an award winning video series, on reserve at Milner library. Information about the *The Expanding Canon* can be found on the following web site: [http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/hslit/](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/hslit/). Go to the following web site to view the series on your computer: [http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/hslit/session1/index.html#](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/hslit/session1/index.html#).

Useful Web Sites

- National Council of Teachers of English.
  - [http://www.readwritethink.org/](http://www.readwritethink.org/)


- [http://www.ncte.org/store/kits](http://www.ncte.org/store/kits)
Additional Highly Recommended Resource Texts for English Education


The course is comprised of four major units grouped by texts. In addition, it includes an introductory unit that introduces what the English Education Program and what most other researchers in the field consider best practices in the teaching of English, which we expect students in our program to implement during coursework, clinicals, and student teaching.

1. Teaching content in constructivist way. *Persepolis* and *Three Wishes*.

2. Educational drama and social justice teaching. *Romeo and Juliet* and *West Side Story*, *Romiette* and *Julio* and *Tears of a Tiger*.

3. Literary Theory. *Farenheit 451*, and *Parable of the Sower*, and *The Expanding Canon Video Series*.


We will use a variety of methods and you will experience a variety of ways of working with texts, most of which can be adapted for all secondary teaching environments. You will learn how to conduct literature circles; conduct small and large group discussions that are student-centered; use reader response as a basic approach to the reading of texts; use writing to learn techniques and how to scaffold traditional essays and non-traditional assessments; and use educational drama to deepen comprehension and the exploration of literature. These are primary methods for teaching writing and literature to secondary students that you will draw upon and develop throughout your teaching careers. All these methods are inquiry-based and are situated in constructivist vs. transmission-based modes of teaching and learning.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T Aug. 22</th>
<th></th>
<th>Unit 1—Introductions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Th Aug. 24</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Building Classroom Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Aug. 29</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Texts: Reading &amp; Writing Together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th Aug. 31</td>
<td></td>
<td>o Read: Steineke, Chapters 1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Sept. 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>o Write: Choose strategies from chapters you would like to adopt for this course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduction to Methods of Teaching English Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Reader Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Writing to Learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussion and Inquiry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Th Sept. 7 |  | Unit 2—Teaching Content and Non-Fiction in Constructivist Ways. Reader Response. Literature Circles. Intertextuality. |
| T Sept. 12 |  | • Texts: Persepolis and Three Wishes, Reading & Writing Together |
| Th Sept. 14 |  | o Read: Steineke, Chapter 5-8 |
| T Sept. 19 |  | o Write: Persepolis Reader Response Journal |
| Th Sept. 21 |  | o Write and Teach: Three Wishes Lessons. Literature Circles |
|           |  | o Write Literature Circle Report—Reflective writing |

| T Sept. 26 |  | Unit 3—Educational Drama and Social Justice Teaching |
| Th Sept. 28 |  | • Texts: Romeo & Juliet, West Side Story, Romiette & Julio, Tears of a Tiger |
| T Oct. 3 |  | o Read: Romeo & Juliet, Ressler article and “Readers Theatre” articles from packet.|
| Th Oct. 5 |  | o Read: Dramatic Changes pp. 1-15, 43-81. |
| T Oct 10 |  | o Write and Teach: Lessons for West Side Story, Romiette & Julio, and Tears of a Tiger using drama structures in Dramatic
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
- Write and Teach: Lessons on *Farenheit 451* and *Parable of the Sower* as intertextual experience. Incorporate authentic writing assignments  
- Write: Midterm (Oct. 12)  
- Write: IATE Report |
| T Oct. 17 |                                      |                                                            |
| Th Oct. 19 |                                      |                                                            |
| T Oct. 24 |                                      |                                                            |
| Th Oct. 26 |                                      |                                                            |
| T Oct. 31 |                                      |                                                            |
| Th Nov. 2 |                                      |                                                            |
| T Nov. 7 |                                      |                                                            |
| Th Nov. 9 |                                      |                                                            |
| T Nov. 14 |                                      |                                                            |
| Th Nov. 9 |                                      |                                                            |
| T Nov. 14 |                                      |                                                            |
| Th Nov. 28 | Share Professional Development and Observation Journals | Write: Self-Assessment |
| Th Nov. 30 | Share Portfolios                     |                                                            |
| T Dec. 5  | Share Portfolios                     |                                                            |
| Th Dec 7  | Closure                              |                                                            |
Packet of articles

News articles
Dear Abby. “Good grammar magic to her ears.”


Journal Articles and Presentations:


Christensen, Linda. “Learning from student writings: The politics of correction. Rethinking Schools, Fall 2003, pp. 20-

Daniels, Harvey. What’s the next big think with literature circles? Voices from the Middle 13 (4), May 2006, pp. 10-15.


____ "My goldfish name is Scaley is what we say at home: Code-switching--a potent tool for reducing the achievement gap in linguistically diverse classrooms.” *Language Arts*.