

Methods of Teaching English Section 01

ENED 353

Fall 2024 4 Unit(s) 08/21/2024 to 12/09/2024 Modified 08/22/2024

Contact Information

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Course Information

The catalog description for this course reads:

Theory and practice of teaching literature and language arts to a diverse student population. Strategies for planning and implementing curricula appropriate to junior and senior high school.

We might start by reading this closely. Like any catalog description, it deliberately doesn't say much: you'll be learning some theories of English teaching and covering curricular strategies for use in secondary classrooms. To me, the most interesting words are *diverse* and *appropriate*, both of which are doing a lot here. On the whole, though, the description is brief and vague, and gives a general impression that what we'll be doing this semester is focusing on the kinds of practical tools you'll be using in your future junior or high school English classroom. That's not wrong, but it leaves out something important.

What I want to emphasize from the start of our time together is that, as the philosopher Gert Biesta puts it, "education is not an interaction between robots but an encounter between human beings." I can't tell you exactly what you'll need to do in your own English classroom someday. In the same way that a good reader interprets language within its context, the type of English teacher you will become will depend on who you are and—crucially—who your students are. Sidorkin and Bingham put it this way: "Why do schools remain if not for meeting?" The interplay between persons—students and teachers, readers and writers—is at the heart of what's meaningful about English teaching. What I can do is help you to think deeply and creatively about what English is, what it should be, and what else it might be for yourself and your students.

Two broad understandings will inform our approach this semester. First, we'll aim to teach students to read texts in English classes so that they might learn to read the world, developing capacities for thought that help them better understand the infinitely complicated, constantly changing and often unjust contexts in which they live. And second, we'll teach students to write as a practice of imagination, working their way towards what might be possible to make those contexts more livable. If we take these two understandings

as starting points, then it becomes possible to see English teaching as more than a set of best practices or discrete skills or even, given the efforts of recent education reformers, a script that anyone could read, but instead as deeply relational and intellectual work.

This semester, you'll read and write your way towards developing a sense of what that work means to you. Together we'll examine and experiment with a variety of theories and practices for teaching English well. As we do so I'll remind you that I'm not so much interested that you teach English in a particular way, mimicking a specific theory or practice; I want you to engage with course readings and activities to develop your own thinking as a teacher. Always, I'll have you read these theories and practices through the lens of your own perspective, considering how and in what ways they fit into your teaching philosophy or not. And I'll ask you to practice thinking about what these might mean for your future students.

Mostly, I'm excited to read and write and talk with you about teaching English this semester.

Course Description and Requisites

Theory and practice of teaching literature and language arts to a diverse student population. Strategies for planning and implementing curricula appropriate to junior and senior high school.

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

A Note

I'd like to minimize the use of tech (phones & computers) in the course as much as possible. This stems from [recent reading](#) on the promise of low-tech (even no-tech) models for university courses; much research indicates these approaches provide students with "opportunities to think for unbroken stretches of time to develop what social scientists call 'cognitive endurance'" as well as a way to counter the significant mental health problems, including anxiety and depression, that studies find strongly correlated with screen time. While I don't think it's realistic or useful to go entirely analog for this class, I do agree with the author that

"students need head space to think about their ultimate values. [Analog approaches] are not ends in themselves or mere vacations from real life but are among the best ways to figure out your own answer to the question of what a human being [and an English teacher] is for — a question that is all the more pressing at a time when the robots soon may be coming for the white-collar jobs in medicine, law and finance [and education] that the intelligentsia treats as shorthand for personal fulfillment."

Practically speaking, this means I ask that phones are put away for the duration of our time together. (We'll be sure to take a break each class when you'll be welcome to check them). You're welcome to use laptops for the purposes of reviewing readings and taking notes, or when otherwise necessary. I appreciate your understanding and support in using tech in this way.

On ChatGPT & Generative AI

A related note: I think the kinds of things that ChatGPT and other generative AI programs do (i.e. write) are the things that you need to do if you're to grow as an English teacher. So, to be clear: any use of ChatGPT or other generative AI for work submitted in this class (other than as part of the activities we'll do with them in class on December 3rd) will be considered a violation of SJSU's [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Program Information

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System").

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:

- A = excellent;
- B = above average;
- C = average;
- D = below average;
- F = failure.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able to:

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.

Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature

Department Office: FO 102

Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/english (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english>)

Department email: [english@sjsu.edu \(mailto:english@sjsu.edu\)](mailto:english@sjsu.edu)

Department phone number: 408-924-4425

Course Goals

In this course, we will:

1. Teach English;
2. Familiarize ourselves with an array of practices suitable for teaching secondary English;
3. Reflect critically on our own perspectives & practices enacted through teaching;
4. Plan English lessons & units;
5. Practice a variety of strategies for teaching reading & writing;
6. Read, write, discuss, question, play.

Course Materials

1. [*Teaching English by Design: How To Create and Carry Out Instructional Units*](#) by Peter Smagorinsky. Heinemann, 2008.
2. [*Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy*](#) by Gholdy Muhammad. Scholastic, 2020.

For both of these, a used copy is fine, and either edition of the Smagorinsky book works. Let me know if you have an issue getting a hold of them. Additional texts will be provided on Canvas.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Participation. (40% of final grade) One of the things we'll keep coming back to, as we think through how best to empower students in your future classrooms, is the notion that students can learn as much from each other as they do from their teacher. This requires participation. We'll model this in our course, and proceed with the expectation that you'll (a) do the readings and (b) share your perspective on them in insightful, challenging, and creative ways. At every point, you are invited to contribute whatever interests or moves or bothers or confuses you, and I'll do the same.

Literacy Autobiography. (15%) Bill Pinar writes that autobiography can be a revolutionary educational act, one that "asks us to slow down, to remember, even re-enter the past, and to meditatively imagine the future." For your first assignment, I'd like you to write an autobiographical piece focused on your own *literacy* (the ability to produce and interpret text for the sake of conveying meaning). As Kevin Burke reminds, literacy is not something someone has in a fixed sense, or something someone is ever finished with, but is instead always ongoing, something we practice and develop every day. In crafting your autobiography, I'd like you to tell us how you became (and are becoming) literate in your life. How did you come to read? To write? To speak? To be? And where are you going with these? You're welcome to write about your schooling, and particularly English Language Arts classrooms, but you're also invited to think beyond that: how literacy is something that happens outside of school, in homes, in relationships, in cities and communities. We'll spend the first few sessions practicing writing on these topics to give you some

material to work with. The actual format of this can and should be what you want it to be: your literacy autobiography might be episodic, focusing on a series of moments in your life, or it might be an extended narrative of one particularly pivotal moment. The form is not important to me; what is important is that you tell your story with literacy. Due: 9/17.

Microteaching Lesson. (15%) With a partner, you will conduct a 30-minute mini-lesson addressing some aspect of a short literary text (poem, short story, flash fiction, excerpt). You might adopt any approach to the text that interests you, including an exploration of reader response, critical theory, or compositional approaches to the text. The main goal is to prompt discussion about some aspect of the text that you believe is important for students. Your lesson will be guided by a learning objective, an agenda, and a form of assessment. Prior to teaching, you will submit a plan on Canvas that includes these three components as well as a 150-300 word rationale for your pedagogical decisions. Following the lesson you will receive constructive feedback from your peers as well as formal feedback from the instructor. Due date varies, 10/8–11/12.

Unit Plan. (15%) Over the course of the semester, you will work with a group to develop a unit plan. A significant portion of the development of this plan will be built into the course, but ultimately you will be responsible for presenting a 4-6 week unit, planned on the unit, weekly, and daily level and based around a concept of your choice (See the Smagorinsky book, especially Chapter 7, for more info). Your unit should be imagined for a particular context of your choosing and should contain the elements we cover in class (more on this in the coming weeks). You will submit your unit plan online via Canvas. Due:11/19.

Photo Essay. (15%) For our final assignment, I'd like you to take 4-6 photos that represent you as a teacher, student, reader, writer, daughter, brother, human, person, etc. Write accompanying text (around 100-250 words each) that explains your choices and gives us some insight into your emerging perspective as an English teacher. As my mentor used to say, use the photos as building blocks for the text. The images should form some sort of coherent narrative about who you are becoming, what you are experiencing. Other than that, these can take any form you like. Play around with possibilities and take chances with the writing. We don't play enough in education. You'll submit the whole assignment to me before our last class; I'll also ask you to choose one of the essays to share with everyone in class, providing a hard copy to all of us before you present. Due: 12/10.

Grading Information

I will always give you detailed instruction and support in class for major assignments. When applicable, I will also distribute rubrics that should help guide your thinking. Additional grading info related to the assignments above will be addressed in class. If you have questions or concerns about your grades, contact me within a week of receiving the grade.

Late work will not receive full credit. I know things happen. Please communicate with me as needed.

We'll use the following grading scale to determine final grades:

100-98 A+ 87-89 B+ 77-79 C+ 67-69 D+ 0-59 F

93-97 A 83-86 B 73-76 C 63-66 D

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Class Calendar

Notes: This is all subject to change depending on how things go this semester. For the Smagorinsky text, the chapters listed below refer to the 1st edition; there may be some discrepancies if you're working with the 2nd. If you're ever unsure, check the agenda topic and chapter title to confirm you're reading the right thing, or just send me an email.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Agenda</i>
8/27	Introductions.
9/3	Why teach? Why English? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Castillo, "How To Read Now" (optional) – Gere, "Why Teach English?" – Zancanella, "Dripping with Literacy, a Jazz-Fueled Road Trip, a Place to Breathe"

9/10	<p>Expanding what counts as “English”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Muhammad, Intro & Ch. 1 (Skim) – Muhammad, Ch. 2 – Whitney, “In Search of the Authentic English Classroom: Facing the Schoolishness of School” – Get started on reading for 9/17 if you can.
9/17	<p>Unit planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Muhammad, Chs. 3, 4, 5 & 6. – Smagorinsky, Chs. 8, 9 & 10. <p>* Literacy Autobiography due.</p>
9/24	<p>Assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Smagorinsky, Chs. 4 & 5.
10/1	<p>Curricular standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – California Common Core State Standards (Introduction, pp. 45-78) <p>* Microteaching Lesson.</p>
10/8	<p>Lesson planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Smagorinsky, Chs. 11, 12, 13 & 14 <p>* Microteaching Lesson.</p>
10/15	<p>Text selection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Muhammad, Ch. 7 <p>* Microteaching Lesson.</p>

10/22	<p>Annotation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Gallop, “The Ethics of Reading: Close Encounters” – Smagorinsky, Ch. 6 <p>* Microteaching Lesson</p>
10/29	<p>Discussion.</p> <p>* Microteaching Lesson.</p>
11/5	<p>No class (Election Day).</p>
11/12	<p>Teaching writing, part I.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Murray, “Teach Writing as a Process Not a Product” – Yagelski, “Writing as Praxis” <p>* Unit Plan due</p>
11/19	<p>Teaching writing, part II.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Dunn & Lindblom, “Why Revitalize Grammar?”
11/26	<p>English & tech: Relevance, affordances, doom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Pleasants, Krutka, & Nichols, “What Relationships Do We Want with Technology? Toward Techno skepticism in Schools”, pp. 486-490, 497-508. – Mishra, “Pencil Literacy: A Framework”.
12/3	<p>A teaching life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Dunn & Johnson, “Loss in the English Classroom” – Fendler, “Edwin & Phyllis” <p>* Microteaching Lesson: Cody & Sam</p>
12/10	<p>Conclusions.</p> <p>* Photo Essay due.</p>