Overview

This course introduces you to research on literacy from across the disciplines and asks you to consider this in light of your experiences from your life as literacy learners and teachers. The course explores two overarching questions: In what ways does literacy come to be defined, by whom, and how does this impact schooling? How might we best engage students in literacy learning? As literacy comes to stand for more and more types of knowing and doing (e.g. cultural literacy, computer literacy, second language literacy, math literacy, etc), it is imperative that we as teachers are fluent with the grammars of literacies.

Key Questions

Within this general framework, the course considers the following more specific questions.

1. **What do we mean by literacy?**
   In a time of changing practices and values, what counts as a text? How do we read various kinds of texts (film, images, literature, magazines, etc) and what do these literacy practices say about others and us? The definition of literacy is changing as rapidly as the kinds of meaning making that people engage with, so how do we develop curricula and pedagogies that meet these challenges? In what ways do you envision the relationship between your content area “English studies” and what you’ll be doing in the classroom? What does English studies have to do with literacy studies and how do you convey this understanding to students?

2. **How do literacy practices develop?**
   What are the cognitive, social, and cultural practices that facilitate the development of literacies? Given our cultural identities and social relations, what do we read and why? In this section of the class, we’ll explore the internal and external influences that motivate literacy. We’ll also explore the nature of schooling, politics of literacy instruction, and mandated testing. How do literacy tests pinpoint, if at all, the kinds of understandings we want students to gain from meaning making?

3. **How do we become flexible teachers of literacies?**
   More and more, teachers do their work with various groups of students in complex learning environments that are increasingly multicultural and multilingual. When we're able to see literacy and learning within complex contexts with which we may not be familiar, we can be more flexible teachers, adaptive to changing situations, definitions of literacy, and students' needs. What kind of teacher do you aspire to be? How do you envision yourself as an effective teacher? With what types of meaning making activities will you engage your students?

We'll consider these questions for the perspective of your experiences as readers, from your observations in placement, from cases we've read about, and from any teaching experiences you may have had. In all, we have a rich course planned for you.
Objectives

This course introduces you to socio-psycholinguistic understandings of reading and literacy to provide a foundation for your teaching strategies and content decisions. By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Articulate a reading philosophy based on one or more well-researched literacy and learning theories.
- Engage in inquiry-based teaching and reflective reading practices
- Demonstrate ongoing and formative assessments of students’ reading
- Engage in many effective ways of meeting the learning styles of different students
- Incorporate effective methods for teaching spelling, sight word recognition, and reading aloud.

These goals are in line with the following professional standards for reading set out by the State of Michigan and the National Council of Teachers of English

Required Textbooks and Meetings

- Attend the MCTE conference Friday 10/3/2008 in Lansing, Michigan. October 29th, 2010

  **Note:** All were ordered through the Student Book Store on Grand River, although may be ordered elsewhere. Please bring your books to class with you on the days readings are assigned from them.

Assignments

**Participation** This includes three parts that will be weighted 30% of your final grade:

1. coming to class well prepared to discuss the readings, working in small groups, and leading discussions when asked to do so. This class will not go well unless everyone contributes to your learning. This means sharing anecdotes from your own learning and teaching experiences, sharing your observations of teachers, and in general helping us see where you’re connecting with the topics. Please bring your books to class with you on the days readings are assigned from them.
2. Attend the MCTE conference, because it’s an introduction to your future professional organization and a good chance to meet and work with potential colleagues.
3. Present your thoughts/work/passions as a group presentation at the end of the semester (details follow).
4. Reading quizzes will be completed on Angel before and after class on the date the readings are assigned. For each reading, you’ll have a quiz that’s really more of a place to start discussion. At the beginning of class we’ll take a short quiz on your assigned reading (look at the quiz and take it before class). These are used solely to set goals for class discussion and guide learning from class. At the end of class, we take the quiz again. By then, everyone should get 100% on these. Quizzes will be available the night before the reading is due and until 8pm the night that class met.

To prepare for these, locate, define, and integrate new vocabulary; select and record quotes that you think are central to the ideas presented then explain what precise language in these quotes is interesting, problematic or troubling to you; select strategies for teaching presented in the reading that you think might be useful in your classroom, then create a variation of these from your own experience. These quizzes will help me see what you’re thinking about, what you want to discuss in class, and what you’re gathering from the readings.
Assignments cont.’

Three Written Projects: two projects of 3-4 pages; one project of 5-7 pages.
These assignments are intended to increase your reflective practice and to offer you a set of tools and materials to bring in to your classroom. All of these assignments have as their potential audiences: classmates, your future colleagues, parents, future students, and me. All of them have the purpose of asking you to integrate the course content into your future teaching and identity as a preservice teacher.

2, 3-4 Page Projects (each one weighted 10% of your final grade)

Write a Wikipedia entry (750-1000 words): think of all the words that we've considered in class. See which of these has been entered in Wikipedia. If none have been entered, then create these. Pay close attention to the rules for submitting so that the entry stays as “knowledge!” www.wikipedia.org. Last year, David created an entry for Sonia Nieto who we read: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonia_Nieto He contacted her via e-mail, she fact-checked the work, and behold! And it needs to be revised—so please do!

Create a library thing (750-1000 words): let us know your reading preferences and history. These are terrific resources for future teachers and you'll see many teachers and librarians using this site already. Summarize the content of the book in 1-2 sentences, discuss why it might be useful/appropriate for adolescents and HS students. 25 book minimum. Add me as a friend/user cushmane. http://www.librarything.com/

A wiki-resource for NCTE student affiliates or other audience you identify (750-1000 words): This will have at least three pages that must include external links, descriptions of why these links are helpful and useful, images and/or graphics that add to the meaning and content. These resources will be for audiences and purposes you designate in the opening welcome page. Many teachers use these to keep in touch with parents, other teachers, or colleagues at other schools.

Position manifestos (750-1000 words): See page 239 Lindquist and Seitz. This can be done individually or as a group.

A teaching resume: Does this really need any explanation? Samples available online.

You tell me (750-1000 words): Choose any of the assignments from the Lindquist and Seitz book and run with one of them. Make sure to indicate in the drop box which assignment you've chosen and the page number.

5-7 Page Project (weighted 20% of your final grade)

Drawing upon your observations, an interview with a teacher or school administrator, or your own experiences as a learner, write a paper in which you develop an answer to any of the questions listed at the top of this syllabus or a related one of your own. In your paper, draw upon any of the readings done in this class, related classes, or outside research to explore your question. The quotes you choose should shed light on the ‘data’ you're presenting and lead you to an initial answer to your question.

Presentations (weighted 30% of your final grade): The end of the semester asks you to present us with ideas and learning strategies that we can then use as resources for our teaching. The best presentations did research beyond what we covered in class, brought in ideas from MCTE, or hit the stacks to explore recent research. Excellent power points included text from which speakers developed their ideas; activities illustrated the theories and provided additional resources and a works cited. Examples will be provided.

Policies and Procedures

1. Regular attendance and participation in class are required to succeed in English 408. Failing to take the reading quiz and do the reading more than 2 times will be noted and will affect your grade for the assignments. Otherwise, missing class more than 3 times total will lower your final grade for the class by .5 grade points for each time missed beyond the 3 allowed—unless you have a documented
medical crisis. Example: missing four classes for the semester and your final grade would have been a 3.5; because you’ve missed one meeting time beyond the allowed, your final grade for the class will be a 3.0.

**Policies and Procedures, cont.’**

2. Class time will be used to facilitate everyone's learning; we will be courteous and respectful to our colleagues.

3. Readings must be read before the class on which they're assigned. Bring the readings to class.

4. Written projects are due in class on the day they're assigned. Assignments are to be uploaded to Angel in the drop box with attachments and links accordingly.

5. If you have a valid reason for not meeting requirements or attending class, let me know. I am flexible when the excuse is legit.

6. Your teacher and English education professors encourage you to synthesize ideas, readings, and materials across (y)our classes into fresh, innovative teaching practices. While university policy on academic honesty stipulates work created for one course cannot be turned in for credit in another, we do hope that ideas, practices, and materials from our courses will be mutually informative and made to speak to each other in new ways.

**Grading and Assignments**

Quizzes and participation: 30% (including attendance at MCTE)
Group presentation: 30%
Assignments: 10 %, 10 %, 20%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade point conversions:</th>
<th>94 – 100 = 4.0</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85 – 93 = 3.5</td>
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<td>79 – 84 = 3.0</td>
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<td>74 – 78 = 2.5</td>
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<td>69 – 73 = 2.0</td>
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<td>64 – 68 = 1.5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>59 – 63 = 1.0</td>
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**Schedule and Units** Key to readings: B (Beers); L (Lindquist/Seitz); R (Rose); H (Haley/Austin); (O (online @ angel>lessons>readings) This schedule is subject to change as needed and by mutual consent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/ Unit</th>
<th>What’s due/ agenda</th>
<th>Homework</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1:</td>
<td>M: 8/30 W: 9/1</td>
<td>No class Introductions. Course overview.</td>
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<td>Assign groups for MI/ELA standards Do readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2:</td>
<td>M: 9/6 W: 9/8</td>
<td>No class Labor day L: 1 &amp; O: ELA standards Do readings &amp; quiz</td>
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<td>Week 4:</td>
<td>M: 9/20 W: 9/22</td>
<td>L: 3 &amp; H: 1 H: 2 Do readings &amp; quiz Assignment 1 check in</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5:</td>
<td>M: 9/27 W: 9/29</td>
<td>H: 4 &amp; 5 B: 6 Do readings &amp; quiz Assignment 1 Due W</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6:</td>
<td>M: 10/4 W: 10/6</td>
<td>H: 6 &amp; 8 L: 6 and H: 9 Do readings &amp; quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7:</td>
<td>M: 10/11 W: 10/13</td>
<td>L: 4 B: 1 &amp; 2 B: 3 &amp; 4 Do readings &amp; quiz Begin assignment 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8:</td>
<td>M: 10/18 W: 10/20</td>
<td>B: 5 - 7 B: 8 &amp; 9 Do readings &amp; quiz Assignment 2 check in</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9:</td>
<td>M: 10/25 W: 10/27 F: 10/29</td>
<td>B: 10 -12 B: 13 Do readings &amp; quiz Assignment 2 Due W</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10:</td>
<td>M: 11/1 W: 11/3</td>
<td>L: 5 R: 6 &amp; 7 R: Intro &amp; 1 Do readings &amp; quiz Findings MCTE on M</td>
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<td>Week 11:</td>
<td>M: 11/8 W: 11/10</td>
<td>R: 3 – 5 R: 8 - 10 Do readings &amp; quiz Bring observation notes</td>
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