Course Overview

This course serves as an introduction to the teaching of literacy in the upper elementary and middle school. The major focus of the course will be literacy instruction in grades 3 through 8 with some discussion of literacy learning at other levels. Throughout the semester, we will examine the ways in which the term “literacy” is constantly evolving in today’s society. In addition, we will explore the relationship between various areas of literacy, as well as the role of literacy across the curriculum. The course is designed to assist future teachers in developing the fundamental knowledge, skills/strategies and dispositions needed to carry out a literacy program where all students’ expertise in reading, writing and oral language is nurtured.

This course is grounded in the belief that students and teachers in a variety of settings have the advantage of working with—and learning from—people of varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The course is designed to prepare teachers for the responsibility of providing high-quality instruction to students who come to school having a wide range of literacy knowledge and experiences. As a part of this, we will explore instructional strategies necessary for teaching English language learners and struggling readers.

Three themes will be part of the ongoing focus of the course. These themes are:

- Questioning how we can effectively address cultural, linguistic and socio-economic diversity
- Rethinking how we approach students through re/mediation. Here we define re/mediation as “changing the ecology of classroom teaching and learning” (Alvermann, 2005, p. 10)
- Redefining “text” to include visual and digital modalities and using technology / multiliteracies to reach reluctant students (Alvermann, 2005)

During each class session, we will explore research-based practices for building literacy in diverse learners. Classes will involve a variety of collaborative activities, such as discussing readings, examining curriculum/assessment materials, analyzing/developing lesson plans, participating in reading/writing workshops and other cooperative learning activities related to content and pedagogy. The instructor will also model lessons specially geared to grades 3 to 8 with an emphasis on higher order comprehension skills, vocabulary development, content area reading, expository writing and struggling readers. There will be an emphasis on exposure to upper elementary and adolescent literature.

Please note that components of this course will involve online learning using our class Wiki, and so online participation is just as important as face-to-face participation.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, each student should be able to:

- Articulate a philosophy of literacy instruction that emphasizes the interactive and integrative nature of language and builds upon these connections when creating learning opportunities.
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills that are needed for creating and implementing a literacy curriculum using small
and large group work, collaborative learning, conferencing, and individual work based on professional standards.

- Identify, plan, and design literacy instruction based on students’ needs, developmental progress, learning styles and prior knowledge.
- Identify and understand the characteristics, uses, advantages, and limitations of different types of assessments for evaluating how students learn, what they know and are able to do, and what kinds of experiences will support students’ growth and development.
- Critically reflect on his/her teaching and learning.
- Identify and use available resources and materials for instructional planning.
- Articulate how educational research can be used as a means for continuous learning and development.

**Required Books**

- One children’s or young adult novel published since approximately 2005
- One professional book from a list provided in class for professional discussion groups (PDG)

**Required Online Texts**

- A variety of required readings in the form of PDF files, websites, online texts, etc. will be available through the Rutgers library system and/or from your course instructor.
- Common Core English Language Arts Standards
- IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts
- New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders

**Communications & Announcements:** I will update our class website each week to post information for your assignments. You are responsible for any information that is presented in these announcements, so please make sure to check the site between classes so that you are aware of any additions and/or changes to the course.

**Evaluation**

**Academic Integrity:** You can find the Policy on Academic Integrity for Undergraduate and Graduate Students at the following site: [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/). Academic integrity is essential to the success of the educational enterprise and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the academic community. Every member of that community bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld. Only through a genuine partnership among students, faculty, staff, and administrators will the University be able to maintain the necessary commitment to academic integrity.

The University administration is responsible for making academic integrity an institutional priority and for providing students and faculty with effective educational programs and support services to help them fully understand and address issues of academic integrity. The administration is also responsible for working with other members of the academic community to establish equitable and effective procedures to deal with violations of academic integrity. Violations of Academic Integrity include any involvement with cheating, the fabrication or invention of information used in academic exercise, plagiarism, facilitating academic dishonesty, or denying others access to information or material, and any violation may result in disciplinary action being taken at either the college or university level. Breaches of academic integrity can result in serious consequences ranging from reprimand to expulsion.

I will follow the policy strictly. It is expected that you comply with standards of academic integrity in this course. If you need assistance in an assignment or course content, please seek assistance from your professor or other appropriate resources. Assignments should be your own work, except in cases where it is a group product. Any resources that are used to guide your thinking and/or written work should be appropriately referenced. The consequence for violating policies of academic integrity and other elements of the student code of conduct are serious.
Assignments & Grading

- Middle Phase Unit Plan & Lesson Reflection: 30%
- Weekly Attendance, Preparation & Active Participation: 20%
- Literacy Investigation (including round table discussion): 20%
- Professional Discussion Group & Workshop Presentation: 20%
- Book Talk: 10%

**Grading Scale**

- **A** = 90-100: Outstanding work
- **B+** = 87-89: Good work
- **B** = 80-86: Satisfactory work
- **C+** = 77-79: Failing work (also stopped attending without withdrawing)
- **C** = 70-76
- **F** = 69 and below

**Feedback:** Once a grade has been given, you can choose to revise the assignment. I am also happy to give feedback and read drafts of assignments as long as you submit them at least one week before they are due. You will then be able to use my feedback to make revisions before the assignment is graded.

**Late Papers:** Any assignment that has not been given an approved extension and that is more than a week late can receive a failing grade. Unless arrangements are made in advance of the due date, late papers and weekly assignments will be graded as such. It is your responsibility to keep up with assignments and due dates as posted on our syllabus and through our class wiki site (http://readingfa12.wikispaces.com/).

**Turning in Assignments:** When turning in assignments, be sure to consider the following:

- I will only accept work that meets professional standards. As teachers, we are expected to clearly communicate information to parents, administrators, and colleagues. For this course, you are expected to hand in proofread work.
- Any assignment that has not been given an approved extension and that is more than a week late can receive a failing grade. Unless arrangements are made in advance of the due date, late papers and weekly assignments will be graded as such. It is your responsibility to keep up with assignments and due dates through our class wiki site.
- I will update each week to post information for your assignments. New information will be posted by Wednesday at midnight at the latest. Check the site between classes so that you are aware of all announcements.
- I am happy to give feedback and read drafts of assignments as long as you submit them at least one week before they are due (or, for lesson plans, one week before they are taught). You will then be able to use my feedback to make revisions before the assignment is graded.
- Once a grade has been given, you can choose to revise the assignment. A revised assignment can receive a maximum of 95% of the assignment’s total points. In addition, I will only accept revisions within a two-week period after you receive your initial grade.

**Confidentiality:** When discussing classroom situations during course sessions, do so carefully. Mask the name of a student on any written or visual work shared in class or used in an assignment. When discussing teaching practices you have observed in the field, be mindful of maintaining a tone of professional courtesy. Under no circumstances (whether in class or in casual conversation with friends) should you relate stories from classrooms or schools that may be embarrassing to teachers or students or that include sensitive information about a child or family.
## Assignments & Grading

More detailed information about each assignment will be available on our Wiki.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Weekly Attendance, Preparation &amp; Active Participation:</strong> Your participation and attendance are necessary for you and your classmates to get the most out of this course. You are expected to <strong>attend every class</strong> session having completed all required readings. I do understand, however, that extenuating circumstances might result in an absence. If you miss class, use the university absence reporting website <a href="https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/">https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/</a> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. Missing class time will result in lost points. For example, you will not earn full credit if you arrive late/leave early regularly, miss classes, or if you do not actively participate. In-class activities that I use to inform my planning count toward your participation grade. Activities related to readings will take the form of written reflections, article discussion group work, station activities, etc. At times materials prepared outside of class will also contribute to this portion of your grade. For example, you will write a 2 to 3 page <strong>Narrative Paper</strong> for our second class session.</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td><strong>Book Talk:</strong> You will read an award-winning text appropriate for use in grades 3 through 8 and present a book talk. The book should be new to you and published since 2005 (unless special arrangements have been made). Examples of awards include the Newbery Medal, Pura Belpré Award, and Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal. (Other book awards can also be considered.) You will sign up to present a short (approximately 5 minute) book talk in class. Post the title and other required information on our wiki site prior to presenting.</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td><strong>Literacy Investigation Paper &amp; Discussion:</strong> As reflective teachers, you will actively connect your professional reading to what you see and do in the classroom. For this paper, you will write a detailed description of observed literacy learning/teaching, describe/explain your reaction, and connect to research/professional texts to support your analysis. For example, if you observe effective instruction, you could link to articles that help you to more deeply understand the rationale for the observed practice. If what you observe does not seem effective, you will link to research that suggests how you might do things differently. Once you have finished your paper you will share what you learned with our class during a Roundtable Discussion. Note: In addition to course readings, you will cite at least two peer-reviewed articles located/read for this assignment (readings not required for GSE courses).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Middle Phase Unit Plan, Lesson Reflection &amp; Roundtable Discussion:</strong> Throughout the semester you will have opportunities to plan, develop, and implement lessons in your field placement. For your <strong>Middle Phase Unit Plan</strong> (20%), you will outline a series of lessons using the GSE Unit Plan format. This assignment will give you the opportunity to think through how you might plan instruction for an extended period of time (your unit will outline instruction for approximately one to two weeks). Consider developing a unit related to your literacy investigation topic, the book that you read for your book talk, or your professional discussion group text. Revisit pages 264-271 and 334-342 of our Tompkins text for more information about how to plan a unit. You will be required to submit this assignment to the Sakai Teacher Education Portfolio. In addition to developing a unit plan and teaching lessons, you will analyze your teaching in a <strong>Lesson Reflection</strong> (10%). After you have taught at least one lesson in your field placement, write a 2-3 page paper reflecting on your teaching experiences. Lessons can be taught one-on-one, to a small group, or to an entire class. I encourage you to consult with peers and classroom teachers as you prepare your lesson. Lesson plans are expected to be course-related and/or connected to your other assignments.</td>
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**Professional Discussion Group & Workshop Presentation:** You will participate in a professional discussion group (PDG) during the second half of the semester. This will include selecting a professional text to study (from titles introduced in class). Groups will be formed based on interest and you will have the opportunity to engage in dialogue and activities centered on the pedagogical and theoretical presentations of literacy instruction offered in the multiple texts. Upon completion of the experience, you will be asked to conduct a mini-workshop (no longer than 30 minutes). Recommended texts for your PDG groups include the following:


20% PDG Workshop Date: _____
**Tentative Schedule**

*Online Class Sessions are indicated with the following:   *

All assignments reflect the integration of national and state content standards, as well as professional teaching standards. Specific standards were listed with each assignment for this course. This is not to suggest, however, that unlisted standards are not addressed.

### Phase I: The research and theory that frame instruction in grades 4 through 8

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<th>Class Session</th>
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<th>Readings Due</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sept. 5</strong></td>
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|            | **Introduction** - *Literacy in Our Lives: What does it mean to be literate? How is “literacy” defined? How might literacy take on different forms in different contexts?**  
*National Reading Panel (2000)-What are the major components of balanced literacy? How have these components evolved since NCLB and RTTT?**  
| **Week 2**    | **Sept. 12**                                                        |                                                                              |                 |
|            | **Literacy in the Middle Grades: How do literacy demands change as students move through the grades? How do effective teachers organize and plan instruction for learners in grades 3 through 8 and beyond? What does effective literacy instruction look like?** | Tompkins Ch. 1  
*Common Core Speaking and Listening (SL) Standards*  
Become familiar with Wikispaces and Wiki tutorials | Narrative Paper – bring to class  
Join our class Wiki |
| **Week 3**    | **Sept. 19**                                                        |                                                                              |                 |
|            | **Examining Reading and Writing Processes: What is the reading process? What is the writing process? What are the basic principles for planning and managing a literacy program?**  
**Creating and Managing a Literacy Program** | Tompkins Ch. 2  
### Week 4  Sept. 26

**Assessment and Evaluation:**
How can teachers assess reading and writing? How can teachers use assessment to inform literacy instruction? How can teachers ethically prepare students for high-stakes tests?

**Assessing for Learning**
Assessment for Reading Instruction by McKenna—What are appropriate assessment tools?

Analyzing Running Records/DIBELS/Literacy Assessments—Progress Monitoring Strategies

How can I identify a student who needs strategic instructional support?

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**Week 5  Oct. 3**

**Differentiating Instruction:**
How do culture and prior experiences relate to literacy practices? How can teachers plan and implement literacy programs based on the needs of diverse populations of students?

What are strategies for addressing the diverse needs of all students?

Response to Intervention/Guided Reading Presentation/English Language Learners in the Classroom

**Literacy for All:** NCLB, RTI, and Diversity in the Literacy Program

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**Phase II: Powerful Teaching**

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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 6 Oct. 10</strong></td>
<td>Eliminating Obstacles to Fluency: What is fluency and why is it important? How can</td>
<td>Tompkins Ch. 5</td>
<td>Bring draft of Literacy Investigation</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Expanding Academic Vocabulary: What are the stages of word knowledge?</td>
<td>Tompkins Ch. 6</td>
<td>PDG Meeting 1</td>
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<td>Vocabularly Activities/“Ceiling Words”/Dead Word Cemetery/Donovan’s Word Jar</td>
<td>PDG Chapter(s)</td>
<td>PDG Meeting 2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bringing Words to Life by Isabel Beck—Best Practices for Vocabulary Instruction in the Classroom</td>
<td>Common Core Language (L) Standards</td>
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<td>Building Vocabulary</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 8</th>
<th>Promoting Comprehension—Reader Factors: What theories inform reading comprehension instruction? How do good readers and writers comprehend texts?</th>
<th>Tompkins Ch. 7</th>
<th>PDG Meeting 3</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 24</td>
<td>What is the ultimate goal of reading?</td>
<td>Tompkins 264-271 &amp; 334-342 (Literature and Thematic Units)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Comprehension: Theory and Strategies</td>
<td>PDG Chapter(s)</td>
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<td>Common Core Reading Literature (RL) Standards</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 9</th>
<th>Promoting Comprehension—Text Factors: What are the unique text factors of fiction, nonfiction and poetry? Why is knowledge of text structure important?</th>
<th>Tompkins Ch. 8 and related videos/websites</th>
<th>PDG Meeting 4</th>
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### Comprehension: Text Structures and Teaching Procedures

#### Week 10
**Nov. 7**

**Teaching Writing:** How can teachers create an environment to support good writing? How do teachers approach spelling instruction in the middle grades?

- Introduction to Writing Workshop
- Minilessons/Conferencing/Writing Partnerships/“Writing from the Heart/Neighborhood Mapping”/Exploring the Works of Ralph Fletcher and Lucy McCormick Calkins

**Writing and Reading**

**Teaching with Trade Books:** How do teachers choose and organize reading materials? What teaching procedures support comprehension of both online and offline texts?

- Tompkins Ch. 9
- PDG Chapter(s)

- Common Core Writing (W) Standards

* Middle Phase Unit Plan to GSE Teacher Education Portfolio*

**PDG Meeting 5**

### Phase III: Effective Instructional Programs

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<th>Class Session</th>
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<th>Readings Due</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 21 Nov. 28</td>
<td>Comprehension Components in the Reading Program</td>
<td>Reading Intervention Programs: A Comparative Chart (Wikispace WebQuest Activity)</td>
<td>Online discussion &amp; activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 21 Nov. 28</td>
<td>Teaching with Textbooks: How do teachers use required textbooks to meet the needs of students?</td>
<td>Tompkins Ch. 11 and related videos/websites</td>
<td>Online discussion &amp; activities (including</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 14 Dec. 5</td>
<td><strong>Literacy Across Disciplines:</strong> What instructional techniques support reading and writing across the curriculum? How do students use reading and writing as tools for learning? Are all teachers responsible for literacy instruction?—Cross-Curricular Connections</td>
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