Learning goals

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.

Course catalog description:

Emphasizes integrated language arts approach to literacy learning in grades three through eight. Connections between reading, writing, and oral language addressed. Reviews strategies to integrate literacy learning with instruction in the content areas.

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1 Check 1:
2 These can be TEAC claims or objectives from other sources.
Other description of course purposes, context, methods, etc:

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.

Grading policy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
<th>Grading Summary</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A = 90-100</td>
<td>A = Outstanding work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+ = 87-89</td>
<td>B = Good work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B = 80-86</td>
<td>C = Satisfactory work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+ = 77-79</td>
<td>D = Poor work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C = 70-76</td>
<td>F = Failing work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D = 60-69</td>
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F = below 60

Assignments³:

- Weekly Attendance, Preparation & Active Participation (20%)
- Book Talk (10%)
- Literacy Investigation Paper & Roundtable Discussion #1 (20%)
- Unit Plan, Lesson Reflection & Roundtable Discussion #2 (30%)
- Professional Discussion Group & Workshop Presentation (20%)

Academic Integrity Policy:

You can find the Policy on Academic Integrity for Undergraduate and Graduate Students at the following site: [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml). 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.

Web site: [https://sakai.rutgers.edu/](https://sakai.rutgers.edu/)

Required Books:

- One children’s or young adult novel published since approximately 2006
- One professional book from a list provided in class for your professional discussion group (PDG)

Required Online Texts:

³ Including exams, papers etc.
- Check Sakai for announcements each week
- Articles posted on Sakai (all articles on this syllabus can be found in Resources under Course Readings)
- Common Core English Language Arts Standards
- IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts
- New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders

**Tentative Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments &amp; Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Literacy in the Middle Grades: <em>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?</em></td>
<td>Tompkins Ch. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Common Core Speaking and Listening (SL) Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Examining Reading and Writing Processes: <em>What is the reading process? What is the writing process? What are the basic principles for planning and managing a literacy program?</em></td>
<td>Tompkins Ch. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Assessment and Evaluation: <em>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?</em></td>
<td>Tompkins Ch. 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 5 | 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?* | Tompkins Ch. 4  
|---|---|---|
| Week 6 | Eliminating Obstacles to Fluency:  
*What is fluency and why is it important? How can teachers help students to become fluent readers and writers?* | Tompkins Ch. 5  
| Week 7 | Round Table Discussion #1  
Expanding Academic Vocabulary:  
*What are the stages of word knowledge? What are some techniques for teaching vocabulary?* | Tompkins Ch. 6  
PDG Chapter(s)  
Common Core Language (L) Standards |
| Week 8 | Promoting Comprehension—Reader Factors:  
*What theories inform reading comprehension instruction? How do good readers and writers comprehend texts?* | Tompkins Ch. 7  
PDG Chapter(s)  
Common Core Reading Literature (RL) Standards |
| Week 9 | Promoting Comprehension—Text Factors:  
*What are the unique text factors of fiction, nonfiction and poetry? Why is knowledge of text structure important?* | Tompkins Ch. 8  
PDG Chapter(s)  
Common Core Reading Informational Text (RI) Standards |
| Week 10 | Teaching Writing:  
*How can teachers create an environment to support good writing? How do teachers approach spelling instruction in the middle grades?* | Tompkins Ch. 9  
| Week 11 | 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. 10  
PDG Chapter(s) |
| Week 12 | Teaching with Textbooks:  
*How do teachers use required textbooks to meet the needs of students?* | Tompkins Ch. 11  
PDG Chapter(s) |
| Week 13 | Literacy Across Disciplines:  
*What instructional techniques support reading and writing across the curriculum? How do students use reading and writing as tools for learning?* | Tompkins Ch. 12  
PDG Chapter(s) |
| Week 14 | Round Table Discussion #2  
Synthesis, Evaluation, and Application:  
Other Articles TBA |