Innovative Writing Strategies in Educational Settings
05:300:402, Section 3, Spring 2014

Instructor: Kim Kaur
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Course Schedule: Tuesdays, 5:35PM - 8:35 PM, Hickman 132

Course Description and Objectives:
Over the course of the past several years, writing has evolved greatly. The ways in which we communicate and express ourselves have been redesigned due to great changes like technology i.e. texting and social networks. Tools like blogs, Facebook, and Twitter have compelled us to write in new ways, and as writers and even prospective teachers, we need to be aware of these changes so that we can celebrate them in the classroom. But, the question is: how?

As members of a society where writing is everywhere, we need to be moving as swiftly as everything else. We need to adopt different kinds of writing strategies to explore not only the how endless creativity can be, but also to further explore the writer that lies in everyone one of us. The purpose of this course, therefore, is to experience several writing forms, and thereby understanding how one day, when we have our own writing classrooms, we can see how students can benefit from these writing forms. In essence, this course will enable you to connect with the writer in you by allowing you to understanding writing as teachers, as students, and well, as writers.

Required Texts and Materials:
Teaching Adolescent Writers, by Kelly Gallagher ISBN#9781571104229
A Writer Teaches Writing, by Donald M. Murray ISBN# 9780759398290
Adolescent Literacy: Turning Promise into Practice ISBN#9780325011288
Other articles to be found online and Sakai

Attendance Policy: As a believer of the idea that involvement in class is of utmost importance, your presence in class is needed. More participation shows me effort on your end, and you will be rewarded for it. However, should you exceed 2 absences, that would result in a grade deduction. Keep in mind, this course only meets once a week for nearly three hours. If you miss one class, you miss out on a lot of information. So please, make sure you are here, and on time. Excessive lateness will also affect your grade negatively.

Late Assignments: If an assignment is late, you do lose 5 points for everyday it is late. If the assignment is more than 3 days late, it will not be accepted.

Plagiarism: Any form of plagiarism is absolutely unacceptable. Since writing is personal, any form of plagiarism is being dishonest to not only school policies, but also to yourselves as writers. The penalties for plagiarism can vary anywhere from either an automatic F on an assignment, to possibly failing the course entirely.

Course Assignments/Breakdown:

Reading Logs/Responses (25%): In addition to weekly readings, every student must submit a 1-2 page response to all the readings each week. Each reading response must not only be a brief summary, but MUST include personal reflection in which students express their own personal views on the given topic.
"Writing Territory" Assignments (20 %)  
"Twitter Novel " Assignment (15%)  
"Facebook Blog" Assignment (15%)  
Cooperative Learning "Senses" Assignment (15%)  
Attendance (10%)

**Schedule for Semester:**

Tuesday, January 22nd

**Critical Questions for Week 1:**

*Exploring the Troubles of Writing in an English Classroom:*

- What are the main frustrations of young writers today?  
- Why has writing become something students are afraid of?  
- How has the need to fulfill educational standards come in the way of creativity?  
- Are there too many limitations we set forth?  
- Why are there so many bad writers? Why do statistics suggest that the race of good writers is dying?  
- **Other discussion topics include:** Sharing of personal experiences from high school writing and college: what were your experiences like? Why was writing interesting or boring? What writing class inspired you? what would you have changed about your English classroom? What is your definition of writing?

HW: Read *Teaching Adolescent Writers*, p. 1-23: "Running with the Literacy Stampede"

HW: Read "Writing in the 21st Century," by Kathleen Blake Yancey (Report by the NCTE)

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Tuesday, January 29th

**Critical Questions for Week 2:**

*The 21st Century Writing Experience: Its Evolution and Series of Changes and How it Affects how Writing will be Taught in Our Current World*

- How has writing evolved and changed? Are we considering these changes in our classrooms today?  
- In our 21st century where technology is redefined the means of communication and expression, how can we think about how this has changed the writing experience in a classroom? How does this new social and cultural shift impact the writing process? Can this be good or bad?  
- **Other discussion topics include:** Discussing Kathleen Blake Yancey's "Writing in the 21st Century:" What does the article examine? What does it propose?  

✓ "Articulate the new models of composing developing right in front of our eyes."  
✓ "Design a new model of a writing curriculum K– graduate school."
✓ "Create new models for teaching."

HW: *Adolescent Literacy*.167-178: "Teaching Writing from the Inside," by Tom Romano

*Adolescent Literacy*.179-187: "Teaching Writing Your Way," by Donald M. Murray

*Adolescent Literacy*.189-208: "Writing: Commonsense Matters," by Linda Rief

Tuesday, February 5th

**Critical Questions for Week 3:**

**Understanding Your Own Visions as Teachers and Writers:** Examining what Writing Means to You

**Thinking About How Would You Teach Writing (Part 1)**

- What inspires the best writing for you? How can you apply these ways to your ways of teaching writing?
- **Activities:** Testing out Donald M. Murray's theory of "let your pen tell you what to say" and "put words down until they wiggle, snake-like, toward a sentence. Write the sentence. Follow it."

HW: Read NCTE Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing, by the Writing Study Group of the NCTE Executive Committee, November 2004


Tuesday, February 12th

**Critical Questions for Week 4:**

**Understanding Your Own Visions as Teachers and Writers:** Examining what Writing Means to You

**Thinking About How Would You Teach Writing (Part 2)**


Tuesday, February 19th

**Critical Questions for Week 5:**

**Finding the Courage to Write:** Breaking Down the Writing Process and Becoming Aware of the Writing Process as Writers and Teachers
• As writers ourselves, what kinds of challenges or anxieties do we feel?
• By being aware of the how much courage it takes to write, how can we as teachers assist students in overcoming these challenges? Overcoming that "writer's block?"

HW: Read *Teaching Adolescent Writers*, p. 89-118: "Beyond Fake Writing: The Power of Choice"

*Adolescent Literacy.* 209-212: "The Importance of Choice," by Penny Kittle

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Tuesday, February 26th

**Critical Questions for Week 6:**

**How can Offering Student Choice Change the Game?**

• What does offering student choice do? How does it impact writing?
• In-class activity: Exploring and testing out Gallagher's "Writing Territories" and Share; Submit "Writing Territory" Assignment 1 for HW
• What does Penny Kittle say about choice?
  ✓ Choosing is the hardest part of composition.
  ✓ Choice expands thinking.
  ✓ A confident voice is developed through choice.
  ✓ Choice feeds writers.
  ✓ Choice feeds the teacher, too.

HW: Read "30 Ideas for Teaching Writing," by the National Writing Project

Read "Beyond 'Pink is a Rose'" by Michele Fleer
• Link: http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/download/nwp_file/301/Beyond_Pink_is_a_Rose.pdf?x-r=pcfile_d

Writing Territory 1 Due Next Week

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Tuesday, March 5th

**Critical Questions for Week 7:**

**Discussing the National Writing Project's 30 ideas of Teaching Writing: Opinions? Ideas? Feedback?**

• From all the ideas that the National Writing Project offer, what are some that stood out? Why? Which ideas seem the most effective and creative?
• Discuss Fleer's "Beyond 'Pink is a Rose'" group poem activity
• Group Poem Activity based on Fleer's Poetry Article

HW: "I Was a Journal Topic Junkie" by Anna Collins Trest
• Link: http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/download/nwp_file/370/I_Was_a_Journal_TOPIC_Junkie.pdf?x-r=pcfile_d
Tuesday, March 12th

Critical Questions for Week 8:

Discussing the National Writing Project's 30 ideas of Teaching Writing (continued) and Exploring Innovative Writing Strategies: Anna C. Trest's "I Was A Journal Junkie"

- Discussion of Article and Trest's Journal Idea: How effective is this writing strategy?
- In-class activity: Experimenting with the "Journal Junkie" activity and then group share

HW: Read "Staging Learning: The Play's the Thing" by Jean Hicks and Tim Johnson


Writing Territory 3 due next week

SPRING BREAK! Yeah, I know you're excited about that.

March 16th-March 24th

Tuesday, March 26th

Critical Questions for Week 9:

Discussing the National Writing Project's 30 ideas of Teaching Writing (continued) and Exploring Innovative Writing Strategies: Jean Hicks and Tim Johnson's "Staging Learning: The Play's the Thing"

- Discussion of Article and How effective is this writing strategy?
- In-class activity: Experimenting with the "Staging Learning" activity and then group share


Read BBC Article "Children Who Use Technology are 'Better Writers,'" by Zoe Kleinman

- Link: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/8392653.stm

Read Education.com article: "Supporting Creative Writing With Technology" By D. Jonassen | J. Howland | R.M. Marra | D. Crismond

- Link: http://www.education.com/reference/article/supporting-creative-writing-technology/Read article: "Twitter Novel Creative Writing Assignment: Students Write a Short Story Using Current Technology Concepts" by Tammy Andrew
Tuesday, April 2nd

Critical Questions for Week 10:

Exploring Innovative Writing Strategies: How can Technology be Infused in an English Classroom to Provoke Powerful Writing; What Can be Done with Technology?

- Discussing how using technology in a writing classroom can enhance the "writing experience:" What does technology do that facilitates writing?
- Examining Sara B. Kajder's "Unleashing Potential With Emerging Technologies" article
- Looking at "Twitter Novel" Creative Assignment and Twitter Cooperative Learning Activity

HW: Read InsideHigherEd.com article: "Technology and Teaching Writing" by Steven J. Corbett


Read Article by the PEW INTERNET & AMERICAN LIFE PROJECT "Writing, Technology and Teens"


"The Effectiveness of Facebook Groups on Teaching and Improving Writing: Students' Perceptions" by Melor Md. Yunus and Hadi Salehi


Read EdSocialMedia.com article "Social Media Makes Students Terrible Writers" by Lucas Ames


Tuesday, April 9th

Critical Questions for Week 11:

Exploring Innovative Writing Strategies: How can Technology be Infused in an English Classroom to Provoke Powerful Writing; What Can be Done with Technology? (Part 2)

- Discussing how using technology in a writing classroom can enhance the "writing experience:" What does technology do that facilitates writing?
- Examining and Comparing Social Media and Technology Impact in Writing Classrooms: The Bright Side and The Dark Side
- Looking at "Facebook Blog" Assignment

"Best Practices in Teaching Writing" by Charles Whitaker, Ph.D.
Tuesday, April 16th

Critical Questions for Week 12:

Exploring Innovative Writing Strategies: What Cooperative Learning do for the Writing Experience?

- Writing is perceived as an "independent process." How can cooperative learning enhance the writing process?
- Does cooperative learning hinder with the writing process? What are the benefits and/or disadvantages of cooperative learning when it comes to writing?
- Discussing, exploring and experimenting with Ann Hill Duin's "Implementing Cooperative Learning Groups in the Writing Curriculum" and Senses activity

HW:

Read New York Times Article: "Those Who Write, Teach" by Davis Gessner


"Challenges for Writing Teachers: Evolving Technologies and Standardized Assessment" by Anne Herrington and Charles Moran


"Teaching Writing Teachers Writing: Difficulty, Exploration, and Critical Reflection" by E. Shelley Reid


Tuesday, April 23rd

Tuesday, April 30th

Critical Questions for Weeks 13 and 14:

- Final reflections, student share, and presentation and discussion of what was learned from the new innovative writing strategies
- Discussion of articles