University of Vermont
EDSC 215: Reading in Secondary Schools
Spring 2015

CESS College Mission

The College of Education and Social Services (CESS) educates and prepares outstanding professionals in education, social work, and human services; engages in scholarship of high quality; and provides exemplary professional service to Vermont, nationally, and globally. We do this to create a more humane and just society, free from oppression, that maximizes human potential and the quality of life for all individuals, families, and communities.

Course Rationale

Reading in Secondary Schools explores the connections among language, literacy, and learning. The goal of the course is to assist preservice teachers in their efforts to develop habits of mind and concomitant teaching practices that utilize language as a tool for understanding and constructing meaning. Students in this course will explore how language/literacy take on different forms and functions in different social contexts and academic disciplines. These socially influenced ways of using language (i.e., reading, writing, talking) reflect valued ways of thinking and knowing within a given academic discipline or school subject. The ways teachers use reading, writing, and discussion in their classrooms value and privilege specific ways of knowing and engaging with academic material. What it means to understand History, for example, may be very different than what it means to understand Math, or Language Arts. Each subject matter—and each teacher, for that matter—privileges specific ways of knowing, or literacy practices. One of the goals of this course is to assist preservice teachers in making these practices visible through examination and reflection. By illuminating these conventions, educators will be better prepared to make deliberative, reflective decisions about teaching their content.

Course Themes, Essential Questions

1) What does literacy mean? What are literacy practices and events?

2) What does it mean to teach something? What is the classroom teacher’s role in, and responsibility for, developing students’ content literacy?

3) What are the valued social languages of different discourse communities? Whose interests do these social languages serve?

4) What does it mean for all students to be successful in my content area? What is the role of literacy in my content area, and why is it important?

5) What are the best tools to support the learning of all my students?
Course Themes, Enduring Understandings

1) **Literacies have consequences:** Every social, cultural, and educational context is defined by literacy practices that have both inclusionary and exclusionary power. These practices, taken up and valued both by educators and students, constitute powerful local contexts for learning and are shaped dramatically by the instructor. The kinds of reading and writing activities teachers use communicate a powerful message about the type and quality of thinking they value and expect of their students and directly affect whether a student can participate successfully in that context.

2) **We are our words and our stories:** Language—oral and written—is not simply a tool for learning; it constitutes the way we conceptualize ourselves and our world. Humans conceive their experience through narrative; this makes narrative one of the most fundamental, and powerful, ways to create and capture thought. Moreover, it is through reading, writing, and discussion activities that students develop an understanding of what it means to “learn” or know an academic discipline.

3) **Educators must teach how:** The most powerful instructors teach their students how to learn as well as what to learn. Telling students what to do is different than showing them how to do it. Making the literacy practices of a discipline explicit and offering students targeted strategies for mastering those literacies are two key components of a successful approach to instruction for all students.

National Standards

This course is designed to address the following standards for secondary educators as developed by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and utilized by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

- [Teacher] candidates demonstrate knowledge of the practices of oral, visual, and written literacy
- [Teacher] candidates demonstrate their knowledge of reading processes
- [Teacher] candidates demonstrate knowledge of the range and influence of print and non-print media and technology in contemporary culture
- [Teacher] candidates integrate interdisciplinary teaching strategies and materials into the teaching and learning process for students.

This course also takes into consideration the working being done around the Common Core.

Reasonable Accommodation

Any student eligible for and needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability should consult with the course instructor.

Academic Integrity

The principles of academic integrity are vital ones to maintain, both as students and as future teachers. In order to be ethical educators, we must consider ourselves first as ethical people and ethical learners. The University of Vermont’s Code of Academic Integrity is one that I take very seriously. Violations include, but are not limited to plagiarism, submitting someone else’s work as your own, and submitting the same work for multiple courses. The code can be found in the Student Handbook or online at [http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf).

Required Readings

In addition to the required readings posted to the course website, additional readings will be provided during the term that will address issues raised during class.
Attendance Policy
Attendance will be taken for each class period. Because the course is focused on discussion with, and learning from, one's peers; it is important that those peers take their course attendance seriously. Your attendance will be reflected in your grades for in-class activities.

Grading Policies
Your final grade will be calculated, using the following assignments and activities.

Literacy Autobiography  Points—20
The literacy autobiography is intended to expand how we think about literacy. To do this, we will examine various aspects of literacy. The first part will focus on an aspect related to your literacy development. The second will examine expertise, and the third will allow you to reflect on your literacy development over the course of the semester. In addition to examining literacies, the assignment will also offer a chance to think about various ways to present knowledge and understanding. To aid this process of “product innovation,” we will discuss various options during class. Prior to completing the pieces, you will submit a proposal of your idea to ensure that you are feeling comfortable with your idea and how you intend to execute the project.

Part 1: You will examine an important aspect of your literacy development with attention to creative presentation. We will discuss additional parameters during class, but the goal is to find and express an important aspect of your literacy development.

Part 2: In this section, you will examine a literacy expert in a “field” that is interesting to you. You do not have to focus on a traditional academic literacy, as we want to think about literacies across the community.

Part 3: In this part, you will address how your understanding of literacy has shifted over the course of the term. Near the end of the semester, we will decide if this should be embedded as a reflection activity, see service-learning portfolio, or if it should be a discrete project. In either case, however, you will be asked to share how your understanding of literacy has shifted.

Literacy Lesson Plans and Presentations  Points—20
You will develop and present three “literacy centric” lesson plans to teach a specific concept, problem, or topic. The lessons should demonstrate your ability to plan and execute approaches to reading, writing, listening, and speaking as ways of learning and knowing within and across the academic disciplines. At the core, we are trying to work out ways to expand the kinds of literacies students experience in the classroom. The lesson plan template will be posted to the course website, and over the course of the semester, you will present three lesson plans. The presentation format will vary from one presentation to the next. For the first lesson presentation, we will use a workshop model where you will share your lesson with the class. For the second lesson presentation, you will be responsible for distributing a literacy artifact that will help ground the discussion. For the third lesson presentation, you will model a portion of the lesson, allowing your peers a chance to experience/execute the literacy activity. For the second and third lessons, you will collaborate with a peer to find ways to support cross-content collaboration.

Service-Learning Portfolio  Points—20
The anchor experience for this portfolio will be a service-learning experience with a community partner. More information about this will be provided during class (and during your initial meeting with your community partner). Your service will be recorded and scored by way of a log which you will receive during the first class period. In addition to your service-learning hours, which will include a weekly commitment with two additional activities, you will have various assignments, including reflection activities, over the course of the term. At the end of the semester, you will turn in your service-learning portfolio for assessment.

Content Area Strategy Packet and Flash Presentation  Points—20
For this assignment, you will explore content specific literacy strategies. You will identify literacy strategies for your content area and develop a strategy packet based on your readings. The strategies (8-10) should be written in line with the guidelines you will be given later in the semester. These will be collected, compiled, and disseminated to everyone in the course. Periodically, you will present strategies from your packet to the class for the purposes of formative development. When you turn in the packet, you’ll give a “flash presentation” on one or two strategies you particularly favor.

**Active Engagement with Discussion/Classroom Activities**

Points—20

Success in this course is predicated on actively engaging with the discussions, readings, and classroom assignments. Attendance and participation will be incorporated into this portion of your grade.

**Letter Grades and Percentage Cutoffs**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-96.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 60</td>
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**Late Work**

- Late written assignments will be docked 20% unless specific arrangements are made in advance. Exceptions are made in the case of extreme emergencies, like a visit to the emergency room.
- In class work may not be made up unless prior arrangements to do so have been made.

**Calendar**

Course readings and assignments will generally be available on our class website. Over the course of the term, the readings may be adjusted to take advantage of inquiry opportunities. To support your journey through the class, announcements will be posted to the course website each week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHEDULE</th>
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| **Week 1** (1.12.2015) | Course Introduction, including course overview as well as discussion about service-learning component  
Complete site selection matrix |
| **Week 2** (1.19.2015) | Reminder  
- Orientation sessions for King Street Center, Boys and Girls Club, and YouthBuild are this week.  
Read  
- *What Americans Keep Ignoring About Finland’s School Success*  
- *Adolescent Literacy: A Policy Research Brief*  
Review  
- Scan *Essential Reading Strategies for the Struggling Reader* and find one strategy that you would like to share. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Read</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4    |     | Read • *Essential Reading Strategies for the Struggling Reader*  
|      |     | Review • Over the course of the semester, we will return to the Common Core English Language Arts Standards which can be found at www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/.
|      | •   | Literacy Lessons (Session 1A)  
| 5    | •   | Literacy Lessons (Session 1B)  
|      | •   | Literacy Autobiography, Part 1  
|      | •   | What Content Teachers Should Know About Adolescent Literacy  
| 6    | •   | Literacy Lessons (Session 1C)  
|      | •   | Children’s Defense Fund: The State of America’s Children, executive summary  
| 7    | •   | Literacy Lessons (Session 1D)  
|      | •   | *The WIDA English Language Learner Can Do Booklet*  
|      | •   | *Access for ELLs*  
|      | •   | *Misconceptions about Teaching English Language Learners*  
| 8    | SPRING RECESS |     |
| 9    | •   | Collaborative Lessons (Session 1B)  
|      | •   | *21st Century Skills: Creativity, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Communication*  
|      | •   | *Act 77*  
|      | •   | Review Common Core with an eye toward creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication  
| 10   | •   | Collaborative Lessons (Session 2B)  
|      | •   | *Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading*  

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Read</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 11     | • Collaborative Lessons (Session 3B)                                 | • Developing strengths, see reading selections on course website  
|        |                                                                      | • National Assessment of Adult Literacy            |
| 12     | • Literacy Autobiography, part 2                                     | • *Assessing Reading Comprehension*, see reading selections on course website |
| 13     | • Collaborative Lessons (Session 1C)                                 | • The Writing Revolution                           |
| 14     | • Content Strategy Packets (with flash presentations)                |                                                  |
|        | • Collaborative Lessons (Session 2C)                                 |                                                  |
| 15     | • Collaborative Lessons (Session 3C)                                 | • Literacy Autobiography, part 3                  |
| 17     | Course Assessment                                                    |                                                  |
|        | • Plus/Delta Analysis                                                |                                                  |
|        | Due                                                                  | • Service-Learning Portfolio                      |
|        |                                                                      |                                                  |
|        | Final Exam                                                           | May 4, 2015 at 1:30 pm                            |