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C&I 427.01: Literacy Strategies for the Middle and Secondary School Content Areas

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LITERACY STRATEGIES FOR THE MIDDLE AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CONTENT AREAS

C & I 427

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Office hours: MW 8:00-8:30
10:00-11:00
T 3:00-4:00

Course purpose:

The purpose of this course is to provide, for preservice teachers, an understanding of the reading/writing connection and the relationship between theory and practice in using the content area to reinforce and develop literacy skills.

Course learning outcomes:

Students will demonstrate, through their performance, a thorough understanding of the following key concepts:

1. The expanded definition of the nature of literacy and its social and cultural impact on a diverse and multicultural society.

2. How students learn most effectively and the application of learning theory to classroom practice.

3. The development of meaningful classroom activities, materials, and resources for future use that guide and assist learning, foster critical thinking, and incorporate literacy skills.

4. Authentic assessment that guides teaching.

5. Academic service learning.

6. Using literature in the content areas.

Instructional methods:

1. Small group activities
2. Whole class participation and discussion
3. Inquiry teaching, deductive and inductive learning
4. Cooperative learning
5. Critical thinking
6. Written response to literature
Rationale for the course:

1. Literacy is both the purpose of education and the right of the student.

2. Students must be taught how to use reading and writing to learn in the content area.

3. The MONTANA SCHOOL ACCREDITATION STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES MANUAL, Board of Public Education states:

   “. . . The education program in Communication Arts encompasses the study of languages and literature, the development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, effective media use, and the nurturing of creative, logical, and critical thinking.”

Required reading:

   Bartoletti, S.  *Black Potatoes*
   Hesse, K.  *Out of the Dust*
   Lowry, L.  *The Giver*  (k-12 Literacy endorsement students, see me for alternate title)

Additional required materials:

   A faculty pack from Denny’s Quick Copy

On reserve in the Mansfield Library and/or Teacher Resource Center:


Tentative schedule:

August 29
   a. Introduction to the course
   b. What is reading?
   c. What do we do when we write?

September 5
   a. Academic service learning
   b. Genres of reading and writing
   c. Introduction to Book Club
   d. Introduction to Writers group
   e. Response to Section 1 in the faculty pack

September 12
   a. Prediction
   b. Response to Section 2 in the faculty pack
September 19
   a. Readability of text
   b. Fog, Fry, Cloze, Maze
   c. Response to Section 3 in the faculty pack

September 26
   a. Vocabulary
   b. Response to Section 4 in the faculty pack
   c. Biography papers due

October 3
   a. Reading comprehension
   b. Response to Section 6 in the faculty pack

October 10
   a. Book club *Out of the Dust*
   b. Reading comprehension

October 17
   a. Reading guides
   b. Response to Section 7 in the faculty pack
   c. Papers due for *Out of the Dust*

October 24
   a. Writers group for *The Giver*
   b. Response to Section 8 in the faculty pack

October 31
   a. Media literacy
   b. Response to Section 5 in the faculty pack
   c. Papers due for *The Giver*

November 7  No class

November 14
   a. Study skills
   b. Relevant literacy activities
   c. Response to Section 9 in the faculty pack

November 21
   a. Assessment
   b. Test taking
   c. Response to Section 10 in the faculty pack
November 28
a. Service learning presentations
b. Student-created faculty pack due

December 5
a. Service learning presentations
b. Text activities due

December 12 Final week

Evaluation criteria:

Attendance is required. More than one absence or repeated tardiness will result in a reduction in your final grade. All assignments must be typed and stapled and must have a separate title page (and a title) or cover sheet; late papers are not accepted. Clear communication is a requirement of our profession; therefore, approximately 1/3 of each grade will be based on the mechanics of writing. Assignments will not be reread: complete them with care. Papers, quizzes, tests, reading assignments, and class activities are designed to meet the dictates of our accrediting agencies (the State of Montana and NCATE), and the guidelines of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instruction and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321.

Required tasks:

- Biography assignment
- Book club paper
- Writers club paper
- Student-created faculty packs
- Textbook activities
- Service learning project
- Responses to article in faculty pack

Grading:

Papers will constitute 70% of your final grade; the service learning project and the responses to the faculty pack will constitute the remaining 30%.

Grading Scale:

- 100-99 A+ (100%)
- 98-94 A (96%)
- 93-92 A- (93%)
- 91-90 B+ (91%)
- 89-86 B (88%)
- 85-84 B- (85%)
- 83-82 C+ (83%)
- 81-78 C (80%)
- 77-76 C- (77%)
- 75-74 D+ (75%)
- 73-70 D (72%)
- 69-68 D- (69%)
- 67 and below F
Assignments:

Biography/autobiography

Select either a biography or an autobiography about someone connected to your academic or artistic field. Discuss why this person’s life is relevant to your field and would be of interest to middle or high school students. You have a variety of options for the rest of the paper:

1. A discussion of the struggles/conflicts that shaped this person’s life
2. A chronological summary of the person’s life from a unique perspective
3. A collage/poster of the person’s life and contributions
4. Another creative way to share the book that you have discussed with me ahead of time

Bring the book to class the day the assignment is due.

Book club

You will be assigned to a book club for Out of the Dust; usually, we have about six people per club. Your paper will include a discussion of three text connections (label each section):

1. Text-to-life
   What is the author saying about the human condition? What themes is the writer addressing? What did you take away from reading this book?

2. Text-to-text
   What other books are similar in some way to this one? In theme? In style? In setting? In character development? Is the book similar to other work by the author? Discuss at least six other books.

3. Text-to-self
   What did you think of the book? What was your reaction to the theme? What is your opinion of the book?

As always, include an introduction and a conclusion. This paper should take no more than three or four pages. Follow it with your reflection (about a page) of the book club experience, e.g., how your peers participated, what changes you would make the next time, etc.

The following tasks will be divided among group members. Include your assigned part with your paper and reflection:

1. A one-page letter that you would send home to parents if you were going to use this book. It should explain book club and its purpose, why you chose this book and its value to students, and how what will happen with book club will help students become better readers and writers.
2. A list of discussion questions that you will ask during book club. (See handout for specific criteria for questions.)

3. Three writing prompts that you would use with students to further their understanding of the themes of this book. Respond to at least one of them yourself.

4. Additional research on the Depression, Dust Bowl, etc. to be shared with the group.

5. Some type of homework assignment for all members of the club.

Book club is accompanied by food related to the book in some way and provided by students, for their group only.

Writers group

We will use The Giver for our writers group. Like all science fiction, this book is set in a future world where the problems facing us today have been extrapolated over time. These future worlds are typically a little grim and these books have strong themes for discussions.

You will respond to a specific list of questions as you read The Giver and select three of your responses to share with your writing group. Based on their feedback and your revisions, you will prepare a paper based on these of your pieces of writing.

You may respond to the questions two ways: either by using a Blue Book (don’t write on the back of the pages) or by typing your responses into one document. Both your journal responses and the three developed pieces will be handed in.

Faculty pack

If we consider literacy to be a willing ability to produce and consume information and ideas from a broad spectrum of sources and media for a variety of purposes, then using print resources to serve specific self-selected purposes can function as a demonstration of one facet of literate behavior. Given the greatly different needs represented by each of your disciplines and expertise, the purpose of this task is to allow you to identify areas which require further inquiry to enhance your knowledge, and to acquire a small collection of articles which deepen your knowledge base.

You will collect ten articles from peer reviewed journals, newspapers, and magazines (no pamphlets or brochures, nothing from the net) which are directly related to teaching in your area or the area of literacy education. Prepare a brief summary of the articles and a specific description of how you might apply the information and ideas to your teaching.

Include also an annotated bibliography of novels that students at your level would read that are related to your discipline or area.

Text book responses

Select a textbook in the area you are preparing to teach and within that text, one topic of focus. We will use Black Potatoes throughout the semester to become familiar with each of the
topics below. Prepare activities to supplement your students reading/writing that include the following topics:

- Readability
- Prediction
- Vocabulary
- Reading Comprehension

Writing activities
One quiz, one test

Responses to faculty pack

Throughout the semester, we will be responding to the articles in the faculty pack a variety of ways, some written, some oral, that demonstrate how we can use literacy strategies to learn in the content area. Always come to class having read the assigned section.

Service learning project

You will be involved in an academic service learning project of your choosing throughout the semester. Twenty hours are required to fulfill this obligation. The last two weeks of class will be devoted to power point presentations of your project.
Responses for *The Giver*

When we read compelling, high quality literature we have a tendency to devour it, to read hurriedly in order to find out how the story ends. By slowing down that process a bit and taking time to reflect, in writing, about important facets of the book, our understanding will be deepened and we will retain more of the story. Pause where indicated and answer the following questions.

Before beginning *The Giver*

List three problems (social, environmental, political, whatever) you believe will be serious threats to the quality of life on earth. Explain your choices and offer a solution to each.

After Chapter 4

The ‘family unit’ here *seems* traditional. How is it different? How do these changes reflect the ideals of the community? What is missing?

After Chapter 8

A common thread in most science fiction novels is the notion of ‘controlling’ much of what makes us human, especially love. Even though divorce in this country is sky high, why do we resist what the community in the book has done to do away with love? What power does love have that threatens totalitarian governments?

After Chapter 12

Describe how language is controlled in the community. Why do they bother to control vocabulary? Why are most books unavailable? Are we limiting or manipulating language in any way now?

After Chapter 16

Memories can be wonderful and they can be debilitating. Many people use drugs or alcohol to escape memories. What is wrong with the community’s method of dealing with the past? What have they lost?

After Chapter 20

We learn what it means to be ‘released’. Even though many people see population explosion as a serious problem, why are we horrified at the solution from the community? Are we headed in their direction?
After completion

1. How does the book end? Do Jonas and Gabriel die? Why or why not (the author, by the way, refuses to answer questions about the ending of the book)?

2. Look back at the three issues you listed before reading this book. Do you want to adjust your choices? Your solutions? What have you learned from *The Giver* about our greatest threats?