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ENT 440.01: Teaching Writing and Justice

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UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
The Department of English

ENT 440
“Teaching Writing and Justice”

Autumn 2012

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I write entirely to find out what I'm thinking, what I'm looking at, what I see and what it means. What I want and what I fear.

- Joan Didion

The point of writing is to bear witness.

-Alice Walker

We write to taste life twice, in the moment and in retrospection.

-Anais Nin

Writing is a lot easier if you have something to say.

-Sholem Asch

They're fancy talkers about themselves, writers. If I had to give young writers advice, I would say don't listen to writers talk about writing or themselves.

-Lillian Hellman

The most essential gift for a good writer is a built-in, shock-proof shit detector.

-Ernest Hemingway

The two most engaging powers of an author are, to make new things familiar, and familiar things new.

-Samuel Johnson

My most important piece of advice to all you would-be writers: when you write, try to leave out all the parts readers skip.

-Elmore Leonard

How vain it is to sit down to write if you have not stood up to live.

-Henry David Thoreau

Most of the basic material a writer works with is acquired before the age of fifteen.

-Willa Cather

The poets down here don't write nothin' at all. They just stand back and let it all be.

-Bruce Springsteen “Jungleland” *Born to Run*

-Jimmy Santiago Baca

I wrote about it all....And for the first time, the child in me who had witnessed and endured unspeakable terrors cried out not just in impotent despair, but with the power of language. Suddenly, through language, through writing, my grief and my joy could be shared with anyone who would listen....I was no longer a captive of demons eating away at me, no longer a victim of other people's mockery and loathing, that had made me clench my fist white with rage and grit my teeth to silence.... Through language, I was free.

Course Overview:

Writing is a complex activity; more than just a skill or talent, it is a means of inquiry and expression for learning across the grades and disciplines. Although English teachers are particularly well situated to address the challenge of improving student writing, all teachers in every discipline should incorporate writing into disciplinary learning. This course will focus on a variety of issues related to teaching writing in the English language arts classroom grades 5-12. The emphasis will be on the complex art of teaching writing with a special emphasis on writing and justice. A major objective of the course is for you to see yourself as a writer as well as a teacher of writing. It is also to help you see the integral links between writing and justice. The central premises of this course are that writing matters and that teachers of writing must themselves write, must study research and scholarship on teaching writing and learning to write, and must engage in student-focused inquiry to discover promising practices for teaching writing effectively with particular individuals and groups of students all within the context of working toward social and environmental justice.

Research and scholarship on teaching writing over the last four decades has greatly enhanced our understanding of best practices for teaching writing and learning to write. It has also demonstrated the integral links between writing, teaching and assessing writing, and issues related to access, relevance, equity and diversity—the key premises of justice. As a result, successful strategies as well as models and resources for building effective approaches to teaching writing for social and environmental justice are widely known and available. This course examines these effective classroom practices for teaching writing and for exploring topics related to social and environmental issues, everyday justice, power relationships, possibilities for collective interest and action and other topics that could be considered social, political, environmental or critical. Pre-service English teacher candidates need to be critically informed about current trends, best practices, research, and issues in the teaching of writing; how the processes of the writer in the real world can be developed in the classroom; how writing can be fairly and authentically assessed; and how writing can be taught not only in the English class, but across the curriculum. Pre-service English teacher candidates also need to be informed about the ways their teaching might make a difference, might make “[f]or a better world” (Bomer and Bomer, 2001).

Course Purpose:

This course is designed for individuals who plan to teach writing in English language arts classrooms grades 5-12. The purpose of the course is to introduce pre-service English teacher candidates to knowledges, pedagogies, and attitudes about teaching writing—about composing processes, about assignment development, about reading and responding to student writing, about revision processes, about teaching grammar and usage in the context of writing and about writing assessment. This course also focuses on the ways that individuals imagine themselves and their possibilities for action, and function together to determine how teachers in English language arts position themselves and others in everyday interactions, in institutions such as schools, and in society. Further, the investigations of these acts of positioning delineate individual and collective opportunities for growth and for social and environmental activism in the profession of the English language arts—opportunities which can have a transformative impact on society. The course is based upon current research, professional association guidelines, and informed practices for teaching writing in ways that foreground and promote respect across multiple social categories, including gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, religion, class, socioeconomic status, and ability. Through writing, reading, research, assessment and instruction, role-playing, small group/large group discussions, and mini-presentations, the course creates a community of writers who reflect upon their own and their future students’ language, literacy,

and learning development, as well as on the legacy the English language arts might leave to the world.

Course Description:

This course serves four purposes in your education as a teacher: (1) to help you become a better writer yourself; (2) to help you learn how to teach adolescents to write successfully; 3) to help you learn how to engage in student-focused inquiry to discover promising practices for teaching writing effectively with particular individuals and groups of students; and (4) to think about the connections between writing and justice. The four strands are intertwined; as you learn more about your own writing process, you will begin to understand how to help others in their own writing processes; inquiry can help you understand specificities that will address individual students' needs. A democracy depends on public attention to the concerns of its members. A conversation aimed at bringing more social justice into a culture must, in part, stem from individual life stories. Furthermore, learning to speak out in the world about what previously seemed domestic and walled in is a step toward political efficacy. When we write, we are always doing something with and to others; writing in school should also address real audiences for real purposes. Only by participating in communities where others are waiting to hear from us, when a group believes our thoughts and words are significant, can we develop a habit of speaking out about things we care about (Bomer & Bomer, 2001 p.2).

So, begin the course with these expectations: You will be asked to write a lot and you will be asked to reflect on your own writing as a way of thinking through how secondary students come to approach the writing tasks we ask of them. You will be asked to dig deep and think critically about what writer's writing processes entail. You will be asked to consider whose interests are served and whose interests are marginalized by standardized approaches to teaching and assessing writing. And you will be asked to think about how writing serves the causes of justice/injustice by critiquing the normalization of privilege and power held in the hands of few, at the expense of many, and to think about how activist teachers have taken action and worked for change.

In this course, we also will be reading a lot. Much of our reading will focus on the words of those experts in rhetoric and composition studies who have researched and thought hard about how students learn to write and how writing serves the causes of justice/injustice. However, we also will be reading the words of each other. Almost all the writing you do in this class will be shared with your peers, both as a way of learning from each other and as a way of learning how to work with the writing of others, offering the kinds of critique and advice you soon will do with your own students.

I recognize that teaching writing can be one of the most challenging and intimidating parts of becoming an English teacher. For many of you, the thought of teaching writing seems a scary proposition: You may yourself struggle as a writer, and the thought of teaching others seems impossible; you may find the thought of assessing the writing of others an overwhelming notion; you may be worried about your own grasp of the rules and structures of "school writing." This course is designed to help you overcome some of those fears as you become more comfortable with both your own writing and some of the current "promising or best practices" successful teachers use in order to teach students to write. I believe the teaching of writing may be the most important job that an English teacher takes on; I also believe it's the most exciting.

I also recognize that asking you to think about writing to change the world adds a thick layer of complexity to an already complex undertaking. However, if we are not teaching from day one in ways that forward the causes of democracy—literacy and justice for all—then we have failed to

understand that language is the medium of democracy. A democracy depends on public attention to the concerns of its members. When we write, we are always doing something with and to others; writing in school should also address real audiences for real purposes. Only by participating in communities where others are waiting to hear from us, where a group believes our words and thoughts are significant, can we develop a habit of speaking out about things we care about. Unless everyone's ways with words are accepted into the great conversation, any conception of public dialogue and mutual decision making is, at best, partial and, at worst, illegitimate and unstable. Unless people can speak to others about what their lives are like—and be heard—there is no mechanism for the political system to work for all its constituents.

In this course we will cover three overlapping strands of interest: *Considering Yourself as a Writer and Social Justice Advocate*, *Considering Yourself as a Teacher of Writing and Justice*, *Considering Your Students as Writers in the Acts of Becoming* (Active, involved, purposeful, deliberative citizens creating freedom, for oneself or for others, through acts of imagination, envisioning, and creating a new world). While these three strands will in some ways be distinct areas of study, they are also interrelated topics. Thus, although our major emphasis will be on one strand at a time, there will be carry over from one to the next.

Strand 1: Considering Yourself as a Writer and Social Justice Advocate

In order to be the best teacher of writing that you can be, you need to be thoughtful about your own writing. In this strand, you will look carefully at your own history as a writer as well as do some of your own writing.

Major projects for this strand:

- Two Hundred Year Present multigenre justice/injustice memoir
- Curricular units
- Difficulty papers in response to reading
- Habitual Writing writers notebook

Reading resources: Try ideas from *Crafting a Life: 100 Quickwrites: Fast and Effective Freewriting Exercises that Build Students' Confidence, Develop their Fluency, and Bring Out the Writer in Every Student*; *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within*; mimic ideas from "Listening," "Learning to See," "Finding a Voice" from Eudora Welty's *One Writer's Beginnings*. Do some of the suggested lessons from *Storytelling for Social Justice*; *Reading, Writing and Rising Up: Teaching about Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word* and *Teaching for Joy and Justice*. Try out some of the ideas from Chapter 9 "Making Something of Our Lives: Reading and Writing Memoir" from *Time for Meaning: Crafting Literate Lives in Middle and High School*. See page 258 in *The Reading/Writing Connection: Strategies for Teaching and Learning in the Secondary Classroom* and material on multigenre papers on the companion website at www.ablongman.com/olson2e. Chapter 10 pdf documents

Strand 2: Considering Yourself as a Teacher of Writing and Justice

One thing we know for sure: Writing can be taught. Much research has been conducted in composition studies over the past four decades that indicates there are promising practices for teaching writing that are particularly successful with students. In this strand, you will have the opportunity to learn about some of those strategies and to investigate a particular strategy in a small group setting.

The world we want to create is composed of richer compassion, more available democracy, greater equity, higher dignity for individuals and communities and a more generally shared sense of plenty, the only democracy we have is the one we make every day (Bomer & Bomer, 2001 p. 24). In keeping silent about social problems, teachers actively lead students to believe that the world is just as it should be and that we should resist change rather than attempt it. The struggle for justice is central to America's moral identity. It is our responsibility as public teachers in America to teach for social action, teach the language of democratic classrooms, introduce the practice of cultural critique and to conduct ourselves as political agents. To do anything less, is to make a mockery both of teaching and of learning in a democracy.

Major projects for this strand:

- Curricular units, year-long curriculum graphic organizer, and mini-portfolio
- Writing assignment exemplars
- Two reading memos about writing themes in writer's notebook
- Overall reflection on teaching adolescent writers—final exam

Reading resources: *Storytelling for Social Justice*; *Reading, Writing and Rising Up*; *Within and Beyond the Writing Process in the Secondary Classroom*; *Teaching for Joy and Justice*; *Stirring Up Justice*; *Teaching Adolescent Writers*; *Time for Meaning: Crafting Literate Lives in Middle and High School*; *Power and Portfolios: Best Practices for High School Classrooms*; *Everyday Use: Rhetoric at Work in Reading and Writing*; *The Power of Grammar: Unconventional Approaches to the Conventions of Language*.

Strand 3: Considering Your Students as Writers in the Acts of Becoming Active, Involved, Purposeful, Deliberative Citizens Creating Freedom, for Oneself or for Others, through Acts of Imagination, Envisioning, and Creating a New World

All the book learning we can do about writing pedagogy only goes so far—we also have to consider how actual students respond to particular ways of teaching. In this strand, you will have the opportunity to work one-on-one with a middle or high school student, engaging in an informal inquiry micro-study of what that student is like as a writer and corresponding with that student over the course of the semester, responding to that student's writing, helping them find a writing center, and reflecting on how you will create opportunities through your teaching to develop active writers and concerned citizens.

Major projects for this strand:

- Curricular units inquiry
- Writing to Power Inquiry Micro-study
- Overall reflection on adolescent writers—final exam

Reading resources: *Storytelling for Social Justice*; *Reading, Writing and Rising Up*; *Teaching for Joy and Justice*; *Time for Meaning*; *Teaching Adolescent Writers*; *Stirring Up Justice*; *The Power of Grammar*;

Course Objectives:

In this course, we will focus both on the theoretical and pragmatic approaches to the challenge of teaching writing and building successful writing programs for justice in our classrooms and schools. We will examine how educators have used writing in diverse classroom and school settings to enrich learning and provide meaningful learning experiences for all students.

Specific questions that will be addressed in our reading, writing, and discussions include:

- How might we consider teachers' moral obligation to promote social justice and the political power of writing as we teach our students?
- Why does writing matter?
- What does research say about the teaching of writing and social justice?
- What are the contemporary theories of composition that drive best teaching practices in writing and social justice?
- What do we mean by "writing processes" and teaching for social justice?
- What are some features of an effective writing classroom that teaches for social action and justice?
- How can writing be used to develop critical thinking and cultural critique?
- How does writing fit into learning across disciplines and the work for justice across the curriculum?
- What kind of pre-service understandings prepare teachers to teach and use writing for equity and justice?
- What might a school-wide writing program that teaches for equity and justice look like?
- What are fair ways to assess writing?
- How do we develop effective instructional plans for teaching writing to diverse learners?
- How might writing be used to implement the twin hopes of "Indian Education for All?"

Learning Outcomes:

In addition to theoretical pursuits and development, the course objectives include the following pragmatic objectives:

1. To provide beginning teachers with the knowledge of written composition, including an understanding of and practice in
 - ⇒ Composing processes—prewriting, writing, conferencing, revising, using reader feedback to improve writing efficacy, editing, publishing
 - ⇒ Rhetorical understanding and analysis:
 - ◆ Different forms of written discourse for different purposes and different audiences
 - ◆ Effects of written language (including different levels of usage and dialects) upon purpose, audience, and comprehension
 - ⇒ Identifying and assessing the developmental abilities of writers
 - ⇒ Using methods to determine levels of writing difficulty
2. To provide beginning teachers with opportunities to
 - ⇒ Take one piece of writing through the entire writing process
 - ⇒ Participate in a writing group
 - ⇒ Consider the strengths and weaknesses of various pedagogical approaches to teaching writing
 - ⇒ Look at the history and current condition of writing instruction in public schools
 - ⇒ Design, implement, and evaluate lessons and strategies that integrate writing instruction into content area instruction and that reflect current research in literacy and learning theory
 - ⇒ Examine and analyze patterns of error in samples of student writing
 - ⇒ Examine and practice evaluation techniques for written work
 - ⇒ Develop a writing portfolio

- ⇒ Experience different ways to organize students for effective whole-class, small group, and individual work
 - ⇒ Explore a variety of effective instructional strategies and materials appropriate to diverse cultural groups and individual learning styles
 - ⇒ Design and use writing assignments to assess students' learning in the content areas
 - ⇒ Interpret assessment of students' writing growth to students, parents, and educators
3. To develop in beginning teachers the attitude that
- ⇒ All learners and languages/dialects have value and worth
 - ⇒ Teachers need to take informed stands on professional and political issues related to literacy achievement
 - ⇒ Teachers need to create communities of learners
 - ⇒ Teachers need to encourage all students to become literate, creative, and responsible individuals
 - ⇒ Teachers need to model the value of writing as a way to learn and develop personally as well as a way to communicate with others
 - ⇒ Teachers ought to be agents of change

This course is part of the English Teaching major and along with ENT 441 satisfies literacy teaching requirements for secondary certification students in all disciplines. Students will be expected to develop the skills and dispositions of exemplary professional educators. While we will all craft our own teaching styles, the basic minimum includes being prepared, punctual, and organized. In addition, you will be expected to work collaboratively to solve problems, take responsibility for your own learning, construct defensible arguments about your choices, and strive to understand your colleagues—especially those who are different from you. C & I 303 is a pre- or co-requisite.

Course/University Policies: Some Unavoidable Legalities

- 100% attendance is expected. Students are expected to be punctual and to stay in class for the entire period. Tardiness and early departure are not tolerated and will result in grade penalty. Should you need to miss class, please contact the professor prior to the expected absence. You are responsible for meeting with classmates to receive information and materials missed during your absence. Additional attendance and participation criteria are listed in the assignments and evaluation section.
- The Registrar's Office asks faculty to provide details follow on the following topics:
 1. The 2012-2013 Catalog is available online via <http://www.umt.edu/home/catalogs/>
 2. The 2012-2013 Academic Calendar is available at the Provost's web site at URL that follows. Note that previous and future Academic Calendar information also may be accessed via this link: <http://www.umt.edu/provost/academiccalendar.html>
 3. The Autumn Semester 2012 Final Exam Schedule is available via: <http://www.umt.edu/Registrar/students/finalsweek2/Autumn.aspx>

4. Key dates for various autumn term activities/deadlines can be found via a number of links. The first is the interactive *Official Dates and Deadlines Calendar* located via this URL: http://events.umt.edu/?calendar_id=27&upcoming=upcoming& The page that opens will show the next ten upcoming events. To explore future dates, choose the “This Month” tab and scroll through the months by clicking the arrows next to the month/year. You can also click on “Subscribe to this calendar” to get a listing of all dates through an RSS feed or download the calendar to your Microsoft outlook calendar by clicking on the .ICS icon. Additionally, we’ve created another document that summarizes important date and deadline information. This document may be accessed along with other calendar information via the following URL: <http://www.umt.edu/registrar/calendar.aspx>
5. Navigate to the following URL and click the appropriate link to review the registration protocol changes announced in April 2012. These changes impact Mtn. Campus students attempting to register for coursework at Missoula College (COT) and vice versa.
<http://www.umt.edu/registrar/FacultyStaff/default.aspx>
6. **Revised Drop/Add Policy – Effective Autumn Semester 2012 (2012-2013 Catalog Excerpt)**. See complete content of the academic policy section of the catalog via the following URL: <http://www.umt.edu/catalog/acad/acadpolicy/default.html>

After registering and through the **first seven (7) instructional days of the semester** students may use CyberBear (<http://cyberbear.umt.edu>) to **add courses** or change sections and credits. Students may add courses or change sections and credits **with the consent of the instructor** from instructional day eight (8) (or equivalent as noted in the catalog) through and including instructional day fifteen (15) of the semester. Consent of instructor may be given by the instructor electronically in CyberBear, or via signed Course Change Form. Fees are reassessed on the sixteenth day of the term. Added courses and credits may result in additional fees.

After registering and through the **first fifteen (15) instructional days of the semester**, students may use CyberBear (<http://cyberbear.umt.edu>) to **drop** courses. For courses dropped by the fifteenth instructional day, no fees are charged and courses are not recorded. (For deadlines and refund policy for withdrawal from all courses, see the Withdrawal sections of the catalog.) An instructor may specify that drop/add is not allowed via CyberBear. Either an electronic (CyberBear) override or a hard copy drop/add form is used to make changes in these courses, if approved by the instructor.

- **DSS Accommodations**

Enrolled students in this course may request and expect that reasonable accommodations will be made for access to success in this course. Please speak with the Professor early in the semester to avoid any misunderstandings or lapse in provision of reasonable accommodations.

- You must elect to take this class for a letter grade.

- Requests to discuss graded papers will be considered once 24 hours have elapsed following the paper's return
- Missing assignments receive the grade of F. No late assignments will be accepted. Plagiarized work results in an automatic F in the course. See student code of conduct. "Plagiarism is defined as using another's words or *ideas* directly or indirectly without citing them. Consequences of plagiarism can range from ostracism to rehabilitation training to zero credit to being dropped from the class to being dropped from the University. Graduate students especially have no excuse for improper bibliographic form, much less plagiarism" (Moore, David L. *Syllabus ENLT 521.01*, Spring 2008). Buying papers from another source or taking lesson plans off the web are also considered plagiarism. **Do not do it.** If you are in such a difficult situation that you feel the need to rob yourself of an opportunity for learning by plagiarizing, please speak with me first about possible alternatives or consider another profession than teaching.
- Incompletes are not assigned at the discretion of the student. Incompletes will only be allowed under circumstances outlined in the catalog. Students must petition the professor in writing for permission to take an incomplete in the course. In the interest of fair play, the highest grade a student may receive following the taking of an incomplete is a B. Plan your time accordingly
- Paper criteria and due dates for papers are listed in the following section. The course uses a portfolio contract approach to grading. In other words, any paper that has received a grade of C (B- for graduate papers) or less may be revised for evaluative reconsideration until the final week of class or December 5. Students wishing to exercise the portfolio revision option must meet with the professor in her office to discuss plans for revision. Students select the contract grade for which they wish to work and are graded accordingly.
- Papers may not be revised for reconsideration following the final exam. The final exam is scheduled. Attendance is mandatory; no changes can be made.
- **The final exam is scheduled Tuesday December 11: 1:10-3:10 in LA 105.** Attendance is mandatory. **No exceptions.**

Student Texts:

Required: These are the core course texts. Reading progress will be checked daily as part of your preparation and participation grade. It is expected that course texts will be used, referenced and cited in your major written work.

1. Bell, Lee Ann. *Storytelling for Social Justice: Connecting Narrative and the Arts in Anti-racist Teaching*. New York: Routledge, 2010.
2. Bomer, Randy. *Time for Meaning: Crafting Literate Lives in Middle and High School*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995.

3. Christensen, Linda. *Reading, Writing & Rising Up: Teaching about Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, 2000.
4. Christensen, Linda. *Teaching for Joy and Justice*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, 2009.
5. Early, Jessica Singer. *Stirring Up Justice: Writing and Reading to Change the World*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2006.
6. Ehrenworth, Mary & Vicki Vinton. *The Power of Grammar: Unconventional Approaches to the Conventions of Language*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005.
7. Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse, 2006.
8. Leslie, Clare Walker, John Tallmadge, and Tom Wessels. *Into the Field: A Guide to Locally Focused Teaching*. Great Barrington, MA: The Orion Society, 1996.
9. Murray, Donald. *Crafting a Life in Essay, Story, Poem*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1996.
10. Roskelly, Hephzibah & David A. Jolliffe. *Everyday Use: Rhetoric at Work in Reading and Writing*. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2005.
11. Wilson, Maja. *Rethinking Rubrics in Writing Assessment*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2006.

Additional Sources: These are texts that will add to your knowledge base and understandings about teaching writing. They are highly recommended if you are in a position to begin building a professional library. They will certainly be useful references that will aid development of the major course assignments. In order to keep costs in check, these books will be placed on reserve in the library.

Anderson, Carl. *How 's It Going? A Practical Guide to Conferring with Student Writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000.

Atwell, Nancie. *In the Middle: New Understandings about Writing, Reading and Learning*. 2nd edition. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1998.

Bomer, Katherine & Randy Bomer. *For a Better World: Reading and Writing for Social Action*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001.

Calkins, Lucy McCormick. *The Art of Teaching Writing*. 2nd edition. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994.

Doman, Reade, Lois Matz Rosen, & Marilyn Wilson. *Within and Beyond the Writing Process in the Secondary English Classroom*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2003.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing Without Teachers*. 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

- _____. *Writing With Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process*. 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Fletcher, Ralph. *What a Writer Needs*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1993.
- Fletcher, Ralph & JoAnn Portalupi. *Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001.
- _____. *Craft Lessons: Teaching Writing K-8*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1998.
- Gere, Anne Ruggles, Leila Christenbury & Kelly Sassi. *Writing on Demand: Best Practices and Strategies for Success*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005.
- Graves, Donald. *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work*. 20th anniversary edition. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003.
- _____. *Testing Is not Teaching: What Should Count in Education*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002.
- _____. *A Fresh Look at Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994.
- Haussamen, Brock with Amy Benjamin, Martha Kolln, Rebecca S. Wheeler. *Grammar Alive! A Guide for Teachers*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2003.
- Heard, Georgia. *Writing Toward Home: Tales and Lessons to Find Your Way*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995.
- _____. *The Revision Toolbox: Teaching Techniques that Work*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002.
- Hillocks, George. *The Testing Trap: How State Writing Assessments Control Learning*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2002.
- Jago, Carol. *Papers, Papers, Papers: An English Teachers Survival Guide*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005.
- _____. *Nikki Giovanni in the Classroom*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1999.
- Kaufman, Douglas. *Conferences & Conversations: Listening to the Literate Classroom*. Portsmouth, N.H., 2000.
- King, Stephen. *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*. New York: Pocket, 2002.
- Kirby, Dan, Dawn Latta Kirby, and Tom Liner. *Inside Out: Strategies for Teaching Writing*. 3rd Edition. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004.
- Krementz, Jill. *The Writer's Desk*. New York: Random House, 1999.
- Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. New York: Anchor, 1994.

- Lane, Barry & Gretchen Bernabei. *Why We Must Run with Scissors: Voice Lessons in Persuasive Writing*. Gainesville, FL: Maupin House, 2001.
- Langer, Judith & Arthur Applebee. *How Writing Shapes Thinking*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1987.
- Lattimer, Heather. *Thinking Through Genre: Units of Study in Reading and Writing Workshops 4-12*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse, 2003.
- Lindemann, Erika. *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*. 4th edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Murray, Donald. *A Writer Teaches Writing*. 2nd edition. Boston: Thomson Heinle, 2004.
- National Writing Project with Carl Nagin. *Because Writing Matters: Improving Student Writing in Our Schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.
- Noden, Harry. *Image Grammar: Using Grammatical Structures to Teach Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1999.
- Ray, Katie Wood. *Wondrous Words: Writers and Writing in the Elementary Classroom*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1999.
- _____. *What You Know By Heart: How to Develop Curriculum for Your Writing Workshop*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002.
- _____. *Study Driven: A Framework for Planning Units of Study in the Writing Workshop*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006.
- Romano, Tom. *Clearing the Way: Working with Teenage Writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1987.
- _____. *Writing with Passion: Life Stories, Multiple Genres*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995.
- _____. *Blending Genre, Altering Style: Writing Multigenre Papers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000.
- Routman, Regie. *Writing Essentials: Raising Expectations and Results while Simplifying Teaching*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004.
- Soven, Margot Iris. *Teaching Writing in Middle and Secondary Schools: Theory, Research and Practice*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1999.
- Sterling, Richard, Kristina Berdan, Ian Boulton et al. *Writing for a Change: Boosting Literacy and Learning through Social Action*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- Strong, William. *Coaching Writing: The Power of Guided Practice*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001.
- _____. *Write for Insight: Empowering Content Learning Grades, 6-12*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2005.

Weaver, Constance. *Teaching Grammar in Context*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1996.

_____. *The Grammar Plan Book: A Guide to Smart Teaching*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2007.

Core texts are available in the University bookstore. Less expensive options may be available from Amazon.com.

Course Assignments and Evaluation:

Preparation and Participation in Daily Assignments

Punctual completion of all assignments. Careful reading of assigned material and thoughtful responses to that material, checked daily. Keeping current with reading and writing assignments. Students are expected to arrive on time and to be prepared to participate in class discussion and learning experiences based on the reading when class starts. Reflective daily assignments or speculative writings in response to readings will be assigned regularly along with the major writing assignments. Peer work and teacher conferences are scheduled regularly. Attendance is mandatory and counts on your final grade. No late papers will be accepted for evaluation.

The standards and criteria that will be used to grade attendance and participation are based on the following:

- *One hundred percent attendance* [If unable to attend a class session due to illness or an emergency, you must arrange with another student to get the notes and be able to summarize and analyze the content of the presentation. All assignments are due on the date given in the syllabus regardless of absence.]
- *Listening carefully, taking notes and asking appropriate questions*
- *Consideration of community: Avoidance of undue claims of time or attention from others.* Consideration of a productive learning community does not mean that we all have to agree. Varying opinions and the life experiences from which differing opinions derive are welcome; however, each member of a productive learning community has an obligation to civility—to listening respectfully, to speaking without malice, to generating clear rationales and suitable evidence to support argumentative claims. In other words, consideration of community does not mean “everyone has the right to their own opinion, regardless of how uncivil that opinion might be.” As teachers and future teachers, we must nurture a professional commitment to social justice—to liberty, democracy, and equity for all—and particularly for those who have been underserved and poorly served by education because of the nature of their identities and backgrounds. In that regard, some opinions and worldviews are better (more morally virtuous) than other views. You need to be aware of students’ gender, religion, sexual orientation, language, and abilities and of how your own background and worldviews affect your teaching. This awareness is a lifelong process, but this course requires you to be sensitive to diversity issues in your classroom interactions, choice of materials, activities, and assessments. As a result, racist, sexist, classist, homophobic and other positions/opinions that discriminate on the basis of identity will be unequivocally repudiated. Your professional attitudes, knowledge, and pedagogy should contribute positively to the literacy, skills, and success of your students.
- *Awareness of and appropriate response to the learning dynamics required in class.* Teachers need to hone their powers of observation. They need to be aware of the feeling tones and emotional responses generated by the disequilibria encountered during the processes of

learning. They need to watch for body language and other verbal cues that signal discomfort, disengagement or retreat. Fine tune your observation skills by noticing body language and other cues that suggest you have spoken too often or too long or too unthinkingly. All that discomforts is not bad, but too much emotional pain inhibits possibilities for learning. Ask others who you think may be struggling if you might help or assist them. Ask for help or assistance if you need it.

- *Academic honesty.* Academic honesty is an expression of an ethic of interpersonal justice, responsibility, and care. It demands that the pursuit of knowledge be conducted with sincerity and care. Therefore, academic dishonesty, including plagiarizing the work of others, downloading or purchasing lesson plans or other written work from the internet and representing it as your own, cheating on tests, violating copyright laws, or conducting research on human subjects without IRB approval, will make the individual subject to discipline which may range from failure on the assignment to dismissal from the university.
- *Technology.* This is the 21st century. You are expected to incorporate technology and print/non-print media into your instructional materials and planned classroom activities. Technology may include resources from the Internet; software programs; lessons involving hands-on computer or web-based instruction; instruction in digital environments; film, television, video or other visuals; graphic organizers, or whatever your creativity with available resources invents. You might want to subscribe to the NCTE Inbox, which is a monthly email newsletter with news and teaching tips.
- *Professional organizations:* Student membership in the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the Montana Association of Teachers of English (MATELA) are required for students majoring in English Teaching. Both give you professional journals and the opportunity to attend professional conferences and purchase professional books at a discount. NCTE also has a wonderful website and listserv, which are invaluable professional resources.

Strand I: Considering Yourself as a Writer and Social Justice Advocate

- Weekly Difficulty Papers
- 200 Year Present-Multigenre Political Memoir
- “Habitual writing” writer’s notebook
- Two Readers’ Memos about Social Action Potential

Strand Two: Considering Yourself as a Teacher of Writing and Justice

- Writing to Implement “Indian Education for All”: A Curricular Unit
- Writing for Justice Curriculum Unit and Year-Long Timeline (see Bomer; Bomer & Bomer)

Strand Three: Considering Your Students as Writers In The Acts Of Becoming Active, Involved, Purposeful, Deliberative Citizens Creating Freedom, For Oneself Or For Others, Through Acts Of Imagination, Envisioning, And Creating A New World

- Writing to Power Micro-study
- Final Exam: Manifesto for Teaching Writing and Justice with Reflections on Adolescent Writers and Teaching Adolescents to Write

See Course Calendar for Reading and Writing Schedule

Weekly Difficulty Papers

You are expected to write regularly in this course. *In preparation for class discussion and writing assignments*, you will write short (½ to 1 page) “difficulty papers”: These are papers in which you identify and begin to hypothesize the reasons for any possible difficulty you might be experiences as you read the weekly texts. Difficulty papers serve at least three purposes:

- They help students begin to reflect on how they read, and why, and on the kind of understanding their ways of reading can produce.
- They help students shape a position from which to speak in class and to engage the thoughts of others.
- They help students to foreground, to begin to analyze, and to assess the intricate moves they must make as readers and teachers who transact and negotiate with a text.

These difficulty papers are not intended to supply space for a rant or to complain or whine about how boring, irrelevant, stupid or dense the text was to read, but to investigate the spots that cause difficulty, either because it doesn’t make sense, or because you can’t imagine a context in which the ideas the writer puts forward would work, or for some other reason entirely. It is intended for you as an opportunity to turn moments of difficulty into moments of understanding. Responses to these papers are not graded because the work is considered exploratory.

200 Year Present-Multigenre Political Memoir

Resources: *The Way to Rainy Mountain* by N. Scott Momaday
Lewis and Clark through Indian Eyes: Nine Indian Writers on the Legacy of the Expedition Ed. b Alvin M. Josephy, Jr.
“Two Hundred Year Present: A Writing Prompt” by Brenda Johnston, Browning High School, Browning, MT
“Three Stanza Memoir: A Writing Prompt” by Heather Cahoon, U.M. Department of Native American Studies

“If we mark history with our own memories and the memories others have passed to us, if all of our days can be measured by the length of a single person’s life and the stories of the generation that precedes him, if twenty years passes with the same swiftness as a single day, then how quickly life turns. Two hundred years can be held in the living breath of one individual.” (35)

—Debra Magpie Earling, “What We See.” *Lewis and Clark through Indian Eyes: Nine Indian Writers on the Legacy of the Expedition* Ed. by Alvin M. Josephy, Jr. New York: Vintage, 2006: 25-48.

The point of this writing activity is three-fold: 1) Writing about and sharing our stories helps to build community. 2) We teach who we are. Learning through thinking and writing about our “two hundred year present” helps to reveal who and what matter of people we are. 3) The activity stands as a model of writing for understanding circumstance and justice.

It is modeled, in part, on N. Scott Momaday’s *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, which is told in three voices. The first voice is ancestral, “the voice of my father,” emblematic of cultural oral tradition—the kinds of stories that “people like me” tell. The second voice is historical commentary, the voice of place and historical memory. The third voice is that of personal reminiscence, personal voice. *The Way to Rainy Mountain* is grounded in landscape, a time that is gone forever, and the human spirit, which endures. “The imaginative experience and the historical express equally the traditions of man’s reality” (Momaday 4).

The Assignment: Assemble 3 artifacts that represent: 1) a significant memory passed down to you from grandparents or other meaningful elders; 2) a significant historical event that marks your generation/outlook on the world; 3) an item that says a good deal about you. Reproduce these artifacts in some creative way—through story, song, poem, painting, photograph or other representative description or image.

Mimic Momaday’s choice of three voices to accompany each of your artifactual representations. There may not be direct correlation, but that is O.K. Memory will build from association and association will build from memory.

Finally, muse on your artifactual representations, your memoir in three voices or stanzas, and write a political analysis of the 200 year present—the insights and inheritances that derive from the reaching back into oral tradition, historical commentary, and personal reminiscence that you reach forward with... What do they entail? What do they imply? How have you benefitted from these inheritances? What material and spiritual belief systems have been passed to you? Some of the concepts for critical reading from Bomer & Bomer *For A Better World* may give you some ideas to generate thinking (pp. 28-37, figures 2.1 & 2.2). What might your artifactual representations and your memoir in three voices imply about your cultural, social, familial, historical relationships with power and justice? How might this influence the “not seen” of your teaching persona? You should notice the ideas you embrace as well as the ideas you resist—both will be important to your understandings about writing and justice.

Planning and Prewriting: In order to do this assignment, think back through your memories—family stories or other tales passed down through the generations. Think about the significance of these stories in your life. Some may be positive, others painful. Whatever their effect, they all contributed to your development. Knowing more about yourself is a foundational experience for learning about teaching writing as we will encounter it during the course.

Length: If you prepare this as a paper piece, the end product should be no more than 5-7 pages in length (double-spaced and typed is best). If you prepare this as a digital piece, 5-7 web pages (including appropriate links) will suffice.

Other Resources: Tom Romano, *Writing with Passion and Blending Genre, Altering Style*; Katherine Bomer, *Writing a Life: Teaching Memoir to Sharpen Insight, Shape Meaning—and Triumph Over Tests*; Dawn Latta Kirby and Dan Kirby, *New Directions in Teaching Memoir*; Joseph Bruchac, *Our Stories Remember: American Indian History, Culture, and Values through Storytelling*; James Burke, *The English Teacher's Companion*, Part I “Foundations” and Part IV: “Issues in Teaching English: Inevitabilities”; Stephen Tchudi and Susan Tchudi *The English Language Arts Handbook*, Introduction, Part One “Planning for English Language Arts” and “Letter to a Young Teacher, pp. 260-263; John Gaughan, *Reinventing English: Teaching in the Contact Zone*; Exercises in *Reading, Writing and Rising Up*. All these books are available at www.heinemann.com. If you wish, I can provide copies for you to borrow.

Audience and Publication: Each student will select one section to read aloud to the whole class on September 12.

“Habitual Writing” Writer’s Notebook

Assignment Due: At random throughout semester

Two truisms about writing are that we become better writers when we are habitual writers and we become better teachers of writing when we write along with our students. Thus, your third major project for the first unit is to keep some sort of writer’s notebook (either handwritten or electronic) and write in it for at least 1-2 hours per week. What should you write in this notebook? It could be ideas for your writing, reflections on writing, responses to reading, thoughts about teaching writing, thoughts about your day, unsent letters to friends or foes, poems, or anything else you choose to write. You may use some of the writing prompts suggested in your course readings for inspiration or try out some of Linda Rief’s *Quickwrites* or Natalie Goldberg’s suggestions in *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within*. You might also consider trying out some of the writing ideas in *Reading, Writing and Rising Up: Teaching about Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word* or some of the suggestions offered by Eudora Welty in *One Writer’s Beginnings*.

In these writer’s notebooks you do not have to worry about perfectly grammatical English, well-formed sentences, or exciting topics; the point is merely to get into the habit of writing.

Because the point is simply to write, I will not be grading these for content or presentation: The grade will be based completely on whether you have written an appropriate amount. Write for yourself. We will begin each class session by offering any class participant an opportunity to read an excerpt from their Writer’s notebook. You should plan on reading from your habitual writing Writer’s Notebook at least twice during the first half of the semester (by October 16) and twice in the second half of the semester (by December 6). I will randomly select students to read at the beginning of each class session. Of course, you may read more than once as long as you don’t hog time. You may select anything you wish to read when called upon. You may choose to pass once... You will be graded on the pieces read when randomly called upon.

Two Readers Memos about Social Action Potential in Your Writing/Teaching Pursuits

Keeping a writer's notebook is writing to think. A writer's notebook is similar to a journal; what makes them different is how they are used—as a well from which to draw writing projects directed at readers. It's like an artist's sketchbook, helping the writer notice and attend to what's around her. Writers use notebooks to gather and incubate ideas, to recycle material, to layer new thinking upon old. When they have a reason to speak out into the world, either because a situation calls for it or because it's the only way to remediate frustration, writers' notebooks provide a resource for topic, ideas, research, and planning or organizing drafts.

When using writing as a tool for thinking about social and political issues, writers look through their notebooks to notice the world through various social and political lenses, creating the seeds for social and political action. Most important, they can rehearse and gradually internalize a habit of looking for trouble, of thinking critically about their social realities. The goal of education is to enable students to do important thinking without teachers' assistance and sponsorship. Writer's notebooks are one of the most useful tools for educating for social justice.

Look through your habitual writing notebook and your difficulty papers to select potential topics related to social issues; everyday justice; power relationships; possibilities for collective interest and action; or other social, political or critical topics. Draw your attention to critical incidents and social issues that can be reframed to direct your attention to the outside world. Broaden the categories of attention to critical incidents and social issues—times when someone is treated unfairly; when someone abuses power; when you realize that other people live very differently; times when you feel anger, pity, compassion, sympathy toward individuals or for members of particular groups; to the dozens of petty outrages you experience as you walk/bike/bus/drive to school or watch kids in the yard; as you engage with service workers; drive through the neighborhoods of our town, watch the morning news, when you have an idea for something you could do with others to make the world better.

Look back through your notebook and catalog the kinds of entries you have made, in order to get a sense of your own strengths and to chart a course for new directions you might try. Review your work with a social lens, looking for it's-not-fair entries, someone-should-do-something-about-this entries, how-to-make-the-world-better entries. Look for entries in your writers notebooks that tackle social questions. Perhaps you have written something in your notebook about people you know, incidents and events in your own life and in the lives of people you love, that can be viewed in a political light by asking, "How did this come to be like this?" "Is this right?" Spot the potential for socially engaged writing in your personal writing. Look at your entries through the lens of, "This is not fair. Something needs to be done about this!"

What kinds of topics do you notice yourself getting passionate about? What is giving you trouble about this kind of thinking? If you were going to teach someone to do the kind of writing for justice that we've been talking about, what would be important to tell him? Which strategies have you tried so far in your notebook to notice what is going on in the

world around you, and which ones do you need to work on? What do you want to speak publicly about? What thinkgs need to be addressed in your classroom, your school, your apartment building, your neighborhood, the city, the country, the world? How will you read and write differently—and reread differently—as you look for issues of fairness and inequality?

Write a readers memo “note to self” about the social issues, noticings and questions you see as you reread your notebook and difficulty papers. What themes seem to take shape? What has been capturing your attention? Political issues—imbalances, silences, associations—are everywhere, constantly present in everyone’s life. What at first seems “personal” may also contain critical material. Spot the political potential in your entries and papers by rereading through critical lenses. Here are some possible themes:

- Being fair and setting things right
- Trying on the perspectives of others
- What people need for happiness and well-being
- Following the money
- Questioning authority
- Feelings of anger and indignation
- Feelings of empathy and compassion
- Identity and affiliation
- Collective action
- Difference

In your memo follow your socially critical thoughts with questions for inquiry and action. Identify the problems and possibilities; think about given realities while envisioning better potential worlds. Consider how you might want to address this in your teaching.

Writing to Implement “Indian Education for All”: A Curricular Unit

We will look at *The Framework: A Practical Guide for Montana Teachers and Administrators Implementing Indian Education for All* by Dr. Tammy Elser (Helena: Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2010), which is a practical guide for understanding high quality implementation of *Indian Education for All*. You will develop a curricular unit with writing exemplars for implementation of best practices that enhance literacy instruction and implementation of Indian Education for All, use inquiry-based approaches, content integration and active pedagogy. We will look at two M.A.T. theses, Casey Olson of Columbus High School and W. Jed Berry of U.M.-Western for ideas that detail practices of implementation through literacy. You will develop your own unit to teach along these lines.

Writing for Justice Curriculum Unit and Year-Long Timeline (see Bomer)

“Writing for Social Action: Collaborating on Texts for Public Purposes” Ch. 8 of *For A Better World* by Randy and Katherine Bomer, *Stirring Up Justice* by Jessica Singer Early and Linda Christensen’s books will be your guide for development of this unit. The

purpose is to develop a unit that mirrors your own social justice interests (see Readers memos) and plan through the texts, writing activities, collective action that you will propose in order to help students think through these issues for themselves. The year-long timeline is a flow chart that shows what you will do to orient your classroom to writing and justice throughout the year. This project may be accomplished in pairs or groups of 3.

General Guidelines for Curricular Unit Plans

You should use multiple resources for this investigation, including course books, additional articles, observations of classrooms, interviews with teachers, websites, etc.

Based in your research and discussion, you will have the opportunity to share your understanding with your class colleagues and me in these several ways:

- *Annotated bibliography*: Resource copied for every member of the class. An annotated bibliography should include (1) every resource you found valuable, organized alphabetically by author's last name and with complete bibliographic information, and (2) a brief summary of each resource, including why you thought it was helpful.

How many resources do you need? That depends on the topic and on what kinds of resources you use, but you must include at least the following: 2-3 course books, 3-5 articles, 1-2 interviews (of teachers and/or students) and 3-4 classroom observations. You should investigate these resources thoroughly in order to help you become a beginning expert in the area; as you plan your inquiry, I'll ask you to meet with me to talk about best resources for your area.

- *Demonstration*: Presentation that includes active participation by the class about some aspect of your inquiry. These demos should be about 30 minutes in length and clarify for the class some specific issue or idea. You will not be able to "cover" the whole topic in this time; rather you should do a short overview of the issues and then pick a hands-on portion that you can demonstrate to us. Thus, the demonstrations might include a specific lesson about writing and some explanation of how that lesson fits into a classroom as a whole (the "why's" of the lesson.) Make sure your demonstration is well organized; I'll ask you to hand in both an outline of your structure as well as any handouts you prepare for the class.

You may choose to assign the class some reading in preparation for your demonstration. If it is from course texts, the previous class must assign it. If not, the selection must be copied and handed out by the previous class. In addition, I will be available to "coach" you prior to your demo day.

- *Alternative genre*: Representation of your learning in some genre other than a straight report. This piece might find form in these or other genres: letter, found poem, series of postcards, play, song lyric, newspaper article, etc.
- *Thematic unit plan*: Your best resource for developing this unit is Carol Booth Olson's *The Reading/Writing Connection: Strategies for Teaching and Learning in the Secondary Classroom*. For this project, you will develop a group-written plan that incorporates appropriate writing and reading and specifically addresses the issue raised by your inquiry and research. It should include:

- At least one commonly taught work of literature or expository text
- Various genres of literature, media, and/or technology suggested for literature circle reading
- Writing activities and explorations
- A rationale (minimum 3 double-spaced pages) which includes:
 - An explanation of the importance or relevance of the topic, preferably tied to theory or research
 - Type of students the unit is designed for
 - An explanation of how the unit accomplishes your larger goals for teaching
 - Key concepts and questions to be explored throughout the unit
 - An explanation of the relevance of the themes, materials, and writing to the targeted students
- Appropriate and varied pedagogical strategies and activities which require critical student thinking, reading and writing
- Assessment or evaluation methods and explanation of what a good one will look like
- Rubrics for any assessment
- An inquiry-based introductory activity for the unit
- List of materials needed for the unit and copies of them in an appendix (unless they're novels or videos or something bulky)
- 4-6 weeks' (20-30 class days) worth of lesson plan outlines that include objectives keyed to the National Professional standards and an explanation of how the lessons meet the standards
- A calendar outlining in brief the unit's activities

The thematic unit should follow the organizational pattern of:

- Background and Overview/Goal
- Rationale
- Content to Be Taught
- Objectives
- Standards addressed/explanation
- Addressing Indian Education for All
- Materials Needed
- Instructional Activities scripted instructional prompts labeled Pre-writing, Drafting, Response, Revision, Editing, Publication
- Methods for Assessment and Evaluation that include a description of how you will recognize student learning when you see it.

The thematic unit should reflect in-depth comprehension of the major concepts presented in the class and through your inquiry. The Instructional Activities portion of the unit that include reading should include Pre-reading, During-Reading and Post-reading organizational strategies and the writing lessons should outline Pre-writing, writing, and post-writing strategies. Effective teaching strategies should be used. Think about ways you might incorporate technology strategies in this unit. Be sure to address assessment issues. Additional evaluation criteria will be distributed in class.

- *Writing assignment exemplar:* This should be a well-developed assignment handout for student writing that accomplishes a goal or objective appropriate to your inquiry.

You should follow the example of assignments given in the syllabus and include the following:

- Background and Overview
 - Rationale that explains how assignment addresses the issue-in-question in your inquiry
 - Objectives
 - Standards addressed and explanation how
 - How the assignment addresses Indian Education for All
 - Assignment
 - Real-world intended audience(s)
 - Purpose(s) for the writing
 - Genre
 - Writing process suggestions
 - Expectations for drafts and workshopping/peer response/teacher conferences
 - Publication expectations
 - Assessment and evaluation
- *Year-long writing curriculum graphic organizer*: Curriculum flow chart that reflects the themes, genres, theories of composition, and writing activities for a year-long curriculum in writing. Think of this chart as a visual overview of the year's writing curriculum. You may wish to create a code that indicates genres, topics, &tc. Visually distinguish the major writing projects from supporting writing projects. Illustrate how student choice and motivation will play a role in the curriculum. Demonstrate how you will organize writing processes from pre-writing to publication and the instructional routines you will impose to support student writing.

The *annotated bibliography*, *alternative genre*, *thematic unit*, *writing assignment exemplar*, *year-long writing curriculum graphic organizer*, *outline* and *handouts* from your demonstration, and individual *reflection on learning* should be put in a mini-portfolio and handed in by each individual or pair on the class day following your demo. Each student writes their own reflection that should include the following:

- What did you learn by doing this research?
- How will this research impact your future teaching?
- What questions do you still have about your inquiry area?

Writing to Power: Considering Audience and Purpose—a Microstudy

Introduction: School is no more immune to the issues of justice, power and association than any other human institution. Follow any student around for the school day, and you will likely encounter:

- Questions of fairness about how people get picked for jobs, teams, or groups.
- Evidence of the low esteem in which school is held in society, including inadequate supplies and decrepit buildings.
- Oppression of younger people by elders.
- The power relations that surround “respect” and “disrespect.”

- The complexities of getting along with a group of people.
- Decisions about how a group deals with an individual who will not conform.
- Issues of voice and silence.
- Abbreviated rights of free speech, free association, free press, and other constitutional “guarantees.”
- The relations between individual choices (of topics, inquiries, reading material) and shared community pursuits.
- The inequitable violence of literacy assessments.
- The power relations encoded in language (e.g., “correct” usage and pronunciation).
- The consequences of cruelty and kindness.
- Restrictions on being able to move freely among different groups (classes, study groups, friendships).

Every one of these issues is deeply political, and the circumstances surrounding them are opportunities for students to think about political themes, local and worldwide. These are the *same issues* for which people go to prison, endure torture, and die. I am not advocating a student revolution, anarchy in schools, or classrooms completely run by children’s wishes, but since these topics are so close at hand, part of students’ daily experience, teachers are making a political decision when they help—or don’t help—students notice them.

In classrooms with ongoing writing workshops, writing-to-think also has a social purpose when community members write about their responses to one another. Writing in their notebook becomes a tool for thinking about, reflecting on, questioning, defending, and deconstructing the events that occur within the community and between its members.

We will examine in *Everyday Use* and *The Power of Grammar* writing issues related to rhetorical situations. For this writing activity, you will work with a middle or high school student on addressing issues related to social justice and communicating with those in power in appropriate ways. Follow the advice of Bomer and Bomer and work with a student to identify an issue of injustice, discover who the appropriate stakeholders are, and write practice letters in three voices to convey the need for suitable strategies of language choice and persuasive devices.

Overview/synopsis: Teachers make decisions about teaching on the basis of various types of information, which include students’ literacy strengths and weaknesses, background knowledge, prior teaching and learning experiences, among others. The purpose of this assignment is to provide you with opportunities to conduct a limited, informal case study (microstudy) of a student writer who is currently in grades 5-12. Your case study will involve gathering information about your student writer, learning what you can about how, what, and why this student writes and responds to school, and conveying what you learned in a written report along with an assessment action plan for teaching writing and justice effectively to this student. Your assessment plan takes account of this one student’s writing strengths and weaknesses and their experience in school and makes appropriate teaching recommendations on the basis of what you have learned about that student as a writer and what you are concurrently learning about promising practices for teaching writing and justice. You will also engage in productive written response/give feedback to the writing the student produces during your microstudy investigation.

Purpose:

The purposes of this assignment are fourfold:

1. To provide you with opportunities to conduct a limited, informal case study (microstudy) of a student writer who is currently in grades 5-12.
2. To explore the writing activities and written texts of a student writer in order to gain insight into those activities as well as the processes by which young writers complete their texts and to identify success and equity factors that seem to shape student writing.
3. To gain insight into research on writing and justice and its limitations and benefits as a source of knowledge about writing and justice instruction.
4. To make appropriate instructional recommendations based on what you have learned about the student's writing strengths, weaknesses, interests, motivations in light of appropriate instructional objectives and goals and professional and state curricular standards.

Assignment/Writing Processes: For this assignment, you will work individually with one student, whom you will select on the basis of pre-established and supportable criteria. Criteria for student selection are listed below. Once you have selected the student and received appropriate permissions from the home and school to work with the student, you will conduct a series of informal writing and justice assessments and inventories in order to gather information about the student's writing behaviors and interests. You will then write a report in which you (1) profile the student (age, school history, family situation, ethnicity, &tc.); (2) describe the assessments, inventories and observations you completed; (3) provide a research-supported rationale for selecting these tools (cite your class texts); (4) describe any artifacts you gathered accompanied by an explanation of how you reviewed/analyzed the writing and justice orientation of the student; (5) explain what you have learned about the student's writing strengths, weaknesses, interests and motivations as a result of your microstudy—about your student as a writer, about what and how s/he writes, attitudes about writing, experiences with writing in and out of school, insights into the writing process; insights into ways equity and fairness impact student writing success; (6) create an action plan for teaching this student, which includes a rationale that delineates the appropriateness and usefulness of the strategies you select. The strategies that you recommend for use with this student in your writing to power action plan should reflect what you have learned about “promising” practices for teaching writing and justice in your course readings, class discussions, and experiences as a writer. (7) Finally, you should conclude your microstudy by posing any speculative questions that can help you think further about your developing role as a teacher and social action activist or fencesitter and by drawing any larger implications about adolescent writers and teaching them.

Methods: This is not a formal research project, rather an inquiry into how one student writes. It should be considered a descriptive, informal inquiry. Therefore, the following methods are suggested:

- **Interviews, inventories:** These will be the primary method for gathering information with your student. These should be informal interviews and inventories from which you try to learn as much about the nature of writing your student does (both inside and outside of school), how your student typically writes, what sociopolitical factors shape the students' habits and attitudes regarding writing, and the role writing seems to play in her/his life. You might also consider interviewing the student's parent(s) or guardian(s), teacher, or others who may have insight into the student's writing abilities and habits. We will work in class to generate questions for your interviews. I also will provide a number of useful inventories developed by well known writing teacher-scholars.

- **Artifacts:** With your student's permission, you should help the student engage in a social justice project of concern to them (rely here on Bomer & Bomer, Christensen, Bomer, and Early); collect samples of the student's writing to power, especially rough drafts and revised versions of that work. For practice in helpfully responding to students' writing, you will correspond with the student in writing—giving helpful feedback and response to guide potential revision in light of intended audience and purpose. This can be done electronically or through hard copy exchange. This is a crucial aspect of your microstudy and an opportunity for you to learn about effective ways to respond. These exchanges will contribute to your microstudy of your student writer. I can't stress enough how vital it is that you faithfully correspond with your student. These young students feel so sad if someone has agreed to give feedback and then fails to do so. So please be responsible about this assignment.
- **Observations:** If possible and/or convenient, you might ask your student to allow you to observe her/him in the process of working on a piece of writing to power. Observations combined with think aloud protocols can provide incredible insights into a writer's processes. Although these are not required, they are quite helpful in revealing interesting information about how, what, and why your student writes.
- **Finding a student:** The student you choose to work with for this assignment can be any current 5th – 12th grade student (middle-high school). I have access to some students at Willard Alternative High School, so if you need help finding a student, consult with me. The student must be willing to participate, which means at a minimum, s/he should agree to be interviewed by you. The student can be someone you know (a relative, friend, or neighbor) who is currently in grades 5-12, or if you have access to a school, a student in a middle or high school classroom.
- **Permissions and related issues:** If the student you work with is someone related to you, you will not need formal permission. In all other cases, a release form including the student and parent/guardian's signatures will be necessary. Your permission statement should say that you are conducting an informal study and that you will use a pseudonym for the student, the teachers and the school in all your write-ups about the study to guarantee the student's anonymity and privacy. Your permission form should also state that the informal study will not be published other than in your university class—and there only as a write-up shared with your colleagues and professor.
- **Practical issues:** You might want to use an audio recorder for interviews. Nonetheless, it is essential to take thorough notes whether interviewing or observing the student even if you use a tape recorder. Allow for sufficient time in contacting the student, obtaining permissions and arranging for meeting(s). Also, allow enough time for writing up your report and action plan.
- **Style, length and related matters:** The paper should be about 5-7 pages in length and include an in-depth analysis of your partner's background as a writer (including what the writer sees as his/her strengths and challenges) and of several of the actual pieces of writing the student has shared with you. For this particular paper, while it is important to reach some conclusions about your writing partner, it is equally important to identify some questions that have grown out of your study, questions that can help you think further about your developing role as a teacher. See this paper, then, as a "Here's what I think now about this

student writer, and here are questions that, if I were his/her teacher, I'd want to keep exploring." Your finished microstudy and action plan should include the following:

- (1) Profile the student (age, school history, family situation, ethnicity, &tc.);
- (2) Describe the assessments, inventories and observations you completed;
- (3) Describe the social justice issue that concerns the student and how you helped them write to power;
- (4) Provide a research-supported rationale for selecting these tools (cite your class texts);
- (5) Describe written artifacts you gathered accompanied by an explanation of how you reviewed/analyzed the writing, include copies of your feedback exchanges;
- (6) Explain what you have learned about the student's writing strengths, weaknesses, interests and motivations as a result of your microstudy—about your student as a writer, what and how s/he writes, attitudes about writing, experiences with writing in and out of school, insights into the writing process;
- (7) Create an action plan for teaching this student, which includes a rationale that delineates the appropriateness and usefulness of the strategies you select, suggested lesson plan ideas, genres, themes, starting points, zones of proximal development, suggested goals for growth, &tc. The strategies that you recommend for use with this student in your action plan should reflect what you have learned about "best" practices for teaching writing and justice in your course readings, class discussions, and experiences as a writer.
- (8) Finally, you should conclude your microstudy by posing any speculative questions that can help you think further about your developing role as a teacher and social justice advocate or fencesitter and by drawing any larger implications about adolescent writers and teaching them.

You will receive a number of assessment and inventory suggestions both in your readings and in class discussions. Additionally, you will learn various writing strategies during the course of the class. You should incorporate these into your action plan as you see fit—cite the course readings. We will workshop drafts in class. Please adhere to the standard conventions of written English, use headings as you would in any formal research report, proofread and edit for errors.

Publication: Students will give brief in-class synopses of their study, providing a one-page handout to other members of the class that gives an overview of findings and instructional recommendations.

Final Exam: Manifesto for Teaching Writing with Reflections on Adolescent Writers and Teaching Adolescents to Write

Have a Safe and Happy Winter Break!