

ENED 353: Methods of English Teaching
Fall 2022

- Instructor:** Scott Jarvie.
- Time:** Tuesdays; 4:00 PM - 6:45 PM.
- Location:** Sweeney 229.
- Office Hours:** Wednesdays, 2:00PM - 4:00PM, Faculty Offices Building 108, & by appt.

You learn about literature so that you can participate in the universe in a more direct way; maybe even in a way, if you're lucky for a while, that accompanies and expands the possibilities for living.
—Blake Butler

You existed to me. You were a theory.
—Tracy K. Smith

Between the wish and the thing, the world lies waiting.
—Cormac McCarthy

Description

The catalog description for this course reads:

Theory and practice of teaching literature and language arts to a diverse student population. Strategies for planning and implementing curricula appropriate to junior and senior high school.

We might start by reading this closely. Like any catalog description, it deliberately doesn't say much: you'll be learning some *theories* of English teaching and covering curricular *strategies* for use in secondary classrooms. To me, the most interesting words are *diverse* and *appropriate*, both of which are doing a lot here. On the whole, though, the description is brief and vague, and gives a general impression that what we'll be doing this semester is focusing on the kinds of practical tools you'll be using in your future junior or high school English classroom. That's not wrong, but it leaves out something very important.

What I want to emphasize from the start of our time together is that, as Gert Biesta puts it, "education is not an interaction between robots but an encounter between human beings." I can't tell you what exactly you'll need to do in your own English classroom someday. In the same way that a good reader interprets language within its context, the type of English teacher you will become will depend on who you are and – crucially – who your students are. Alexander Sidorkin and Charles Bingham put it this way: "Why do schools remain if not for meeting?" The interplay between persons—students and teachers, readers and writers—is at the heart of what's meaningful about English teaching. What I can do is help you to think deeply and creatively about what English is, what it should be, and what else it might be for yourself and your students.

Two broad understandings will inform our approach this semester: first, we teach students to read texts in English classes so that they might learn to read the world, developing capacities for thought that help them better understand the infinitely complicated, constantly changing and often unjust contexts in which they live. And second, we teach students to write as a

practice of imagination, working their way towards what might be possible to make those contexts more livable. If we take these two understandings as starting points, then it becomes possible to see English teaching as more than a set of best practices or discrete skills or even, given the efforts of recent education reformers, a script that anyone could read, but instead as relational, critical, aesthetic and deeply intellectual work.

This semester, we'll read and write our way towards developing your own sense of what this work means to you. Together we'll examine and experiment with a variety of theories and practices for teaching English well. In doing so, I'll remind you that I'm not interested that you teach English in this particular way, mimicking a specific theory or practice, but rather I want you to engage with course readings and activities to develop your own thinking as a future teacher. Always, I'll have you read these theories and practices through the lens of your own perspective, consider how and in what ways they fit into your teaching philosophy, or not. And I'll ask you to practice thinking about what these might mean for your future students.

Mostly, I'm excited to read and write and talk with you about teaching English this semester.

Objectives

In this course, we will:

1. Teach English;
2. Familiarize ourselves with an array of practices suitable for teaching secondary English;
3. Reflect critically on our own perspectives & practices enacted through teaching;
4. Plan English lessons & units;
5. Practice a variety of strategies for teaching reading & writing;
6. Implement a variety of formative & summative assessments;
7. Read, write, discuss, question, play.

Required Texts

[*Teaching English by Design: How To Create and Carry Out Instructional Units*](#) by Peter Smagorinsky. Heinemann, 2008.

[*Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy*](#) by Gholdy Muhammad. Scholastic, 2020.

For both of these, a used copy is fine, and either edition of the Smagorinsky book works. Let me know if you have an issue getting a hold of them. Additional texts will be provided on Canvas.

Assignments

Participation. (40% of final grade) One of the things we'll keep coming back to, as we think through how best to empower students in your future classrooms, is the notion that students can learn as much from each other as they do from their teacher. This requires participation. We'll model this approach in our course, and proceed with the expectation that you'll (a) do the readings and (b) share your perspective on them in insightful, challenging, and creative ways. At every point, you are invited to contribute whatever interests or moves or bothers or confuses you, and I'll do the same.

Literacy Autobiography. (15%) Bill Pinar writes that autobiography can be a revolutionary educational act, one that "asks us to slow down, to remember, even re-enter the past, and to meditatively imagine the future." For your first assignment, I'd like you to write an autobiographical piece focused on your own *literacy* (the ability to produce and interpret text for the sake of conveying meaning). As Kevin Burke reminds, literacy is not something someone has in a fixed sense, or something

someone is ever finished with, but is instead always ongoing, something we practice and develop every day. In crafting your autobiography, I'd like you to tell us how you became (and are becoming) literate in your life. How did you come to read? To write? To speak? To be? And where are you going with these? You're welcome to write about your schooling, and particularly English Language Arts classrooms, but you're also invited to think beyond that: how literacy is something that happens outside of school, in homes, in relationships, in cities and communities. We'll spend the first few sessions practicing writing on these topics to give you some material to work with. The actual format of this can and should be what you want it to be: your literacy autobiography might be episodic, focusing on a series of moments in your life, or it might be an extended narrative of one particularly pivotal moment. The form is not important to me; what is important is that you tell your story with literacy. Due: 9/6.

Microteaching Lesson. (15%) With one or more partner(s), you will conduct a 30-minute mini-lesson addressing some aspect of a short literary text (poem, short story, flash fiction, excerpt). You might adopt any approach to the text that interests your group, including an exploration of reader response, critical theory, or compositional approaches to the text. The main goal is to prompt discussion about some critical aspect of the text that you believe is important for students. Your lesson should a) be guided by a learning objective, b) an agenda, and c) a form or assessment. Prior to teaching, you will submit a plan that includes these three components as well as a 150-300 word rationale for your pedagogical decisions. Following the lesson you will receive constructive feedback from your peers as well as formal feedback from the instructor. Due date varies, 9/6-11/29.

Unit Plan. (15%) Over the course of the semester, you will work to develop a unit plan. A significant portion of the development of this plan will be built into the course, but ultimately you will be responsible for presenting a 4-6 week unit, planned on the unit, weekly, and daily level and based around a concept of your choice(See the Smagorinsky book, especially Chapter 7, for more info). Your unit should be imagined for a particular context of your choosing and should contain the elements we cover in class (more on this in the coming weeks). You will submit your unit plan online via canvas. Due: 10/25.

Photo Essay. (15%) For our final assignment, I'd like you to take 4-6 photos that represent you as a teacher, student, reader, writer, daughter, brother, human, person, etc. Write accompanying text (around 100-250 words each, but this is negotiable – write what you need to) that explains your choices and gives us some insight into your emerging perspective as an English teacher. As my mentor used to say, use the photos as building blocks for the text. The images should form some sort of coherent narrative about who you are becoming, what you are experiencing. Other than that, these can take any form you like. Play around with possibilities, and take chances with your writing. I don't know that we play enough in education. You'll submit the whole essay to me by December 6th; I'll also ask you to choose one of the essays to share with everyone in class, providing a hard copy to all of us before you present. Due: 12/6.

Grading

I will always give you detailed instruction and support in class for major assignments. When applicable, I will also distribute rubrics that should help guide your thinking. Additional grading info related to the assignments above will be addressed in class. If you have questions or concerns about your grades, contact me within a week of receiving the grade.

Late work will not receive full credit. I know things happen. Please communicate with me as needed.

We'll use the following grading scale to determine final grades:

100-98	A+	87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+	0-59	F
93-97	A	83-86	B	73-76	C	63-66	D		
90-92	A-	80-82	B-	70-72	C-	60-62	D-		

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. is available on the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' Syllabus Information web page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

Acknowledgements

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Class Calendar

<i>Date</i>	<i>Agenda</i>
8/23	Introductions.
8/30	Why teach? Why English? – Gere, “Why Teach English”. – Morrell, “Critical English Education”. – Muhammad, “Introduction”.
9/6	Expanding what counts as “English”. – Muhammad, Ch. 2. – Whitney, “In Search of the Authentic English Classroom: Facing the Schoolishness of School” * Literacy autobiography due.
9/13	Unit planning. – Smagorinsky, Chs. 7, 8, 10. – Muhammad, Chs. 3, 4, 6.
9/20	Assessment. – Smagorinsky, Chs. 4, 5.
9/27	Curricular standards. – California Common Core State Standards (Introduction, pps. 45-76)
10/4	Lesson planning. – Smagorinsky, Chs. 11, 13, 15
10/11	Text selection. – Muhammad, Ch. 7
10/18	Annotation. – Gallop, “The Ethics of Reading: Close Encounters” – Smagorinsky, Ch. 6
10/25	Discussion. * Unit plan due.
11/1	Teaching writing.
11/8	Teaching writing.
11/15	Integrating technology.

11/22	A teacher's life.
11/29	Thinking differently. – Beachy-Quick, "A Pedagogy Torments Itself With a Question That Questions Itself" – Biesta, "Against Learning: Reclaiming a language for education in an age of learning" – Eisner, "Educational Objectives–Help or Hindrance?"
12/6	Conclusions. * Photo essay due.

Class Roster

I share this so we have a record of who we are & how to contact each other.

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