

COURSE WEBSITE: angel.msu.edu

Log on using your MSUID username and password. The link for our course will show up on your course menu. All assignments and drop boxes for assignment uploads will appear on our class website. PLEASE check your ANGEL email regularly (at least twice a week) - this is how I will communicate with you. If you are unsure how to use ANGEL, please ask me for help.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will explore concepts of literacy, our learners' literacy practices, our literacy goals for our students, and how our instructional practices (especially as we consider literacy across content areas) fit into these visions.

Recent research indicates the importance of knowing who students are - their personal histories, their cultures and gender, their aspirations for themselves and how they see themselves as learners. These things all influence what happens in the classroom and how students learn. Learning about our students involves learning what questions to ask them and how to ask these questions, as well as learning how to listen to and interpret the responses we get. Effective literacy instruction requires us to learn how to act on this information we gather.

We will approach this course through an inquiry stance, looking for ways to integrate reading, writing, thinking and reasoning in our respective content areas. When inquiry is at the heart of learning and teaching, it can help drive and define instructional purpose. Inquiry involves exploration of questions, sharing ideas, and building theories together with our students. Teaching with inquiry requires that teachers understand big issues and problems in their disciplines, which can help shape powerful purposes and questions for collaborative discovery.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What are current problems and challenges in adolescent literacy? How do these issues affect you as an educator, regardless of subject matter or the grade level you currently teach?
- What are your long-term literacy goals for your learners? How can we engage students in meaningful reading, writing, and reasoning experiences, so they grow as literacy learners and develop the literacy practices to reach our (and their) goals?
- Who are your learners? What skills, aspirations, and challenges do they bring to your classroom? What resources can you draw upon to help better understand learners? What literacy practices do students draw upon in (academic literacies) and out of (home/community literacies) the classroom? How do these literacy skills affect what you choose to do in the classroom (planning, curriculum, assessment, activities, and so on)?
- What happens when inquiry shapes instruction? How can shared classroom inquiry help students engage purposefully with the primary content and skills of a lesson or unit of study?
- How can you assess your own practice (through reflection, collaboration, or other means), so you continue to work towards your teaching goals while sustaining yourself and your passion for teaching?

COURSE TEXTS**Required:**

Christensen, L. (2000). *Reading, Writing and Rising Up: Teaching about Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

This syllabus is a work in progress and is subject to change

Hinchman, K.A., & Sheridan-Thomas, H.K. (Eds.). (2008). *Best practices in adolescent literacy instruction*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Wilhelm, J. (2007). *Engaging readers and writers with inquiry: Promoting deep understandings in language arts and the content areas with guiding questions*. New York: Scholastic.

I will post additional readings, videos, or resources to the class ANGEL site.

ONLINE COURSE STRUCTURE

An online course can provide wonderful opportunities for flexibility, both of time and place. We can attend class and participate in discussions from the comfort of our own homes, often choosing what time of the day or week is most convenient for our schedules. However, the course is set up with the idea that you will work through certain modules during certain weeks. Please note the due dates for discussion posts and assignments.

The course is organized into three modules; each module builds on the one before. Each module includes readings, discussion forums, and a culminating assignment. (These modules are not all complete in angel at this point. However, they will be completed well before you need them.)

Typically, you will have a selection of readings to complete each week, as well as some posted response. I may ask you to post a general response to the whole class, to a small group, or privately to your instructor. I may also guide you to respond to specific questions, or to try an activity related to the week's readings. These regular, weekly postings are a primary way I can see your engagement with class ideas. Together they constitute a significant portion of your final grade (see participation section below). There will also be three core assignments (see core assignment section below), which will be spaced throughout the semester.

In general terms, online class sessions are designed to parallel the expectations of in-person class sessions. Thus, the course requires both time to *prepare for class* (reading class texts, writing/conferring about readings, working on projects, gathering resources, etc.) and time to *participate in class* (interacting with instructor and peers, reviewing additional class materials, viewing videos, participating in online discussions, exploring ideas together, collaborating with group members, etc.).

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND ROUTINES

[I will provide detailed descriptions for each assignment in angel. These brief descriptions are meant to provide you with an overview of the course. The forthcoming assignment descriptions will explain process and expectations in more depth.]

Class Participation and Weekly Discussion Posts [30% of final grade]

As noted above, TE 843 is designed to provide ongoing opportunities to learn through conversations/interactions with peers, instructors, and other resources. These conversations provide spaces to think, to share, to ask, to collaborate and to learn from each other. Thus, your participation in class discussion is essential and required. Your participation grade will be determined by your timely and thoughtful participation in all class activities.

When participating in discussion, please remember that our purpose is to provide a place for you to do some thinking about readings or concepts on your own, and then to interact with fellow classmates. In this space, you are *writing to learn*, so your goal is to make sense of what you can and apply the readings in ways that support your learning. Thus, I hope you will use these posts to try out new ideas, take risks, explore questions, and organize your thinking. PLEASE READ "GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION" in the Orientation and Management folder.

Often I will ask you to post a response to one or more assigned readings, as well as comment on at least two peer posts. I also expect you to at least skim peer responses to which you do not respond. When you reply to peer writing, you should try to engage the writer in conversation about his/her post. Your comments can include making additional connections to the reading or class discussion, extending or refining the ideas presented, asking questions or suggesting alternate interpretations, or making connections to your own teaching experiences. As responders, you should seek to be as specific as possible, trying to extend your own and the writer's understanding of the class readings. As I read your discussion posts, I will ask myself:

1. **What are you learning?** Does this student demonstrate an understanding of concepts and theories presented in the class readings and other materials?
2. **How clearly do you express yourself?** Does this student ask questions, answer questions or otherwise contribute in a productive and comprehensible manner?
3. **How well do you work with others?** Does this student offer constructive criticism during discussions and build on other's ideas? Does this student assume leadership and maintain active participation in small groups?
4. **To what extent do you go beyond what is given?** Does this student relate concepts from class to their experiences as a teacher and learner, generating new insights and applications?

Literacy Inquiry Project [20% of final grade]

What are key issues in national conversations about adolescent literacy? How do we make sense of common terms such as *adolescent*, *literacy*, or *literacy practices*? What literacy practices do adolescents draw upon in school and out of school? How can we learn about our literacy learners? For this assignment, you will explore how we can get to know our students as literacy learners in order to help us organize literacy instruction. You will select adolescent literacy learners and explore their literacy practices, using our course readings to help guide you. You could use classroom observations, out-of-school observations, student interview data, examples of student work, teacher or parent interview data, etc. to think about how his/her experience connects with what you are reading. Details to come... (Due June 5 by midnight).

Integrating Literacy Lesson Plan [20% of final grade]

How can we make use of what we learn about our learners to help us engage them in purposeful classroom literacy practices? At this phase, you will determine appropriate instructional purpose(s) for these learners and merge those purposes with what you have learned about your students to design literacy pedagogy to support these learners. This project will take the form of a lesson plan for integrating literacy strategies into regular instruction and/or classroom routines. Details to come... (Due June 17 by midnight)

Unit Plan [30% of final grade]

How will you apply your adolescent literacy to the bigger picture of curriculum design? Drawing largely upon either the Wilhelm or the Christensen text, you will design a unit (or revise an existing unit) that will be meaningful for your own learning and teaching goals. This unit plan should be designed for your classroom context and put theories from this course into action for your own students. This unit should integrate reading, writing and reasoning to engage your literacy learners through inquiry (Wilhelm) or critical literacy (Christensen). (Proposal due June 22 by midnight; Final due June 30 by midnight).

COURSE POLICIES

Grading

I will send you feedback on your assignments in a timely fashion. If you are concerned about your grade, pay attention to comments and questions I include in your paper and feel free to schedule an appointment to contact me for clarification.

94-100% 4.0

88-93%	3.5
82-87%	3.0 2.5 2.0
76-81%	1.5
70-75%	0.0
65-69%	
Below 65%	

Saving and naming files

To help me keep track of papers, please name your documents in the following way: TE843 Lastname Firstwordofassignment.doc For example: TE843 Borsheim Inquiry.doc

Writing Guidelines

Writing proficiency is a minimum requirement for satisfactory completion of this course. All written work must reflect adequate writing skills in order to receive a grade. Please edit your work carefully and check for spelling/typographical errors before turning it in. If you feel you need outside support with writing, the Writing Center in 300 Bessey Hall (tel: 432-3610; website: <http://writing.msu.edu/default.html>) can be of assistance). I may refer you there if I feel they may be of service to you. If you already know that you have weaknesses in your writing, please see me as soon as possible, so we can arrange assistance. Please do not feel embarrassed about coming to me for help - assisting you is my job as your instructor.

Late Assignments

The only time that I will accept late work is if you have contacted me prior to the due date and I have given you permission to do so. If you turn in late work without talking to me then you will lose percentage points on a daily basis.

Academic Honesty and Integrity

We assume that the student is honest and that all course work and examinations represent the student's own work. Violations of the academic integrity policy such as cheating, plagiarism, selling course assignments or academic fraud are grounds for academic action and/or disciplinary sanction as described in the university's student conduct code. Incidents of plagiarism are taken very seriously and will be pursued. Students are strongly cautioned not to copy any text verbatim without using appropriate quotations and source citations. For University regulations on academic dishonesty and plagiarism, refer to <http://www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/rule32.htm> <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/plagiarism.html>

Problem solving

If you have problems with the course or the instructor, you must first speak with the instructor about the situation. If the problem cannot be resolved at the level of interaction, then you may contact the faculty course or subject area leader Dr. Randi Stanulis after that, the team coordinator or team leader. Names and contact information for the relevant individuals can be found in the Secondary Team Handbook located at: <http://ed-web2.educ.msu.edu/team4/>

Accommodations for Disabilities

Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor, call 353-9642 (voice) or 355-1293 (TTY). Instructors in the course may request a VISA Form (Verified Individual Student Accommodations Form) from a student requesting services.

Module/Weeks	Tasks & Due Dates	Readings
Module 1: Weeks 1 - 2 (weeks of May 16 and May 23) <i>Learning about our literacy learners</i>	Week 1 1. Read syllabus, guidelines for discussion and materials in the "Orientation and Management" folder 2. Post an introduction by Saturday, May 21 3. Read classmates' introductions by Sunday, May 22 4. Complete Week 1 Readings 5. Complete the Week 1 Discussion Post by Sunday, May 22 by midnight Week 2 6. Complete Week 2 Readings 7. Complete Week 2 Discussion Post by Sunday, May 29 by midnight 8. Week 2 Activity 9. Literacy Inquiry Project Due Sunday June 5 by midnight	Week 1: Alverman Moore et al NCTE policy brief Moje et al (optional) Look at: Hinchman forward (short) Wilhelm forward (short) Christensen forward (short) Week 2: Tatum (in Hinchman & Sheridan-Thomas) Hinchman Part I Choose 1: Xu, Wilber, or O'Brien & Dillon
Module 2: Week 3 (week of May 30) <i>Integrating adolescent literacy and classroom practice</i>	1. Complete Week 3 Readings 2. Complete Week 3 Discussion Post by Sunday, June 5 by midnight 3. Week 3 Activity 4. Integrating Literacy Lesson Plan Due June 17 by midnight	Hinchman & Sheridan-Thomas Part I - Choose 2 Additional readings TBD
Module 3: Weeks 4 - 7 (Week of June 6, 13, 20, and 27) <i>Using adolescent literacy to inform curriculum design</i>	Week 4 1. Complete Week 4 Readings 2. Complete Week 4 Discussion Post by Sunday, June 12 by midnight 3. Week 4 Activity Week 5 4. Complete Week 5 Readings 5. Complete Week 5 Discussion Post by Sunday, June 12 by midnight 6. Week 5 Activity Week 6 7. Complete Week 5 Readings 8. Complete Week 5 Discussion Post by Sunday, June 19 by midnight 9. Week 6 Activity 10. Post draft of unit by Wednesday June 22 by midnight 11. Respond to colleagues' units by Sunday, May 26 by midnight Week 7 12. Design a Unit Due June 30 by midnight 13. Course Reflection Due June 30 by midnight 14. Course evaluation	Week 4: Wilhelm chapter 1 - 2 Christensen chapter 1 At this point, choose either Wilhelm or Christensen... Week 5: Wilhelm 3 - 4 OR Christensen 2 - 3 Week 6: Wilhelm 5 - 7 OR Christensen 4 - 7 Week 7: No reading. Workshop and work on final units

