

literacy + technology

Across Middle Level Disciplines

TCH 306 • Spring 2021 • Dr. Robyn Seglem

Office: DeGarmo 253 • Phone: (309) 438-3969

E-Mail: rseglem@ilstu.edu

Office Hours: By appointment

Online Access: <https://experienceliteracy.wixsite.com/tch306>

our essential questions

What is literacy?

What are the literacy practices in your content area?

How will you support ALL students' literacy practices?

course description

Study of early adolescent literacy learning and instruction. The purpose of this course is to acquaint teacher candidates with the role of reading and literacy in the middle grades. Emphasis is placed on factors that influence students' reading and learning from content texts and adolescent literature, as well as on the role of technology in the classroom. Students examine, apply, refine, and reflect upon various strategies designed to enhance literacy at the middle school level.

This course fosters the intellectual virtues reflected in Realizing the Democratic Ideal. Students demonstrate and apply knowledge concerning the appreciation of the diversity among learners and consideration of appropriate teaching strategies.



Course Content

course objectives

Through participation in this class, students will be able to:

- explain the significance of literacy instruction in the content areas while understanding the relationships among cognitive processes, cultural conditions, personal characteristics, and effective reading and writing; (IRA 1.1; ISBE 1.1A; NMSA: 4K1, 4D4, 4P5; RDI: EC1, EC4, IC2)
- identify and present learning strategies to teach literacy in content areas in the middle school environment as an active process of constructing meaning; (IRA 2.2, ISBE 3.3B; NMSA: 1P10, 3D2, 3D4, 5D6, 5K9; RDI: IC3)
- develop and demonstrate a range of content area instructional strategies that support literacy growth among students from a range of backgrounds, needs, and levels of success; (IRA 2.2; NMSA 3K10; RDI: EC1, IC1, IC2, IC3)
- examine the reading process as an extension of language and cognitive development; (IRA 1.4; RDI: IC1)
- realize the types of learning environments that motivate students to read and learn; (IRA 4.4; RDI: IC3)
- explain the relation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension, as well as strategies for developing; (IRA 1.4; RDI: IC1, IC3)
- understand the role of prior knowledge in reading and strategies for building and accessing background knowledge; (IRA 1.4; RDI: IC1, IC3)
- reflect upon one's instructional behaviors; (NMSA: 5K6; RDI: EC3, IC4, IC5)
- design, plan, and implement instruction based on assessment data; (IRA 3.1, 3.3, 4.1; ISBE 2.2C; NMSA: 1K3, 1K2, 5K2; NMSA: 3P1; RDI: EC4, IC1, IC2, IC3, IC4)
- read, evaluate, and discuss literature for adolescents; (IRA 4.3; RDI IC5)
- choose and use technologies that support collaborative literacy practices to enhance student learning and teacher candidates' professional development. (IPTs 1G, 2F, 2L, 3N, 4K, 5O, 8M, 9T; RDI IC2, IC3, IC4; IRA 5, 6, 8, 12)

There is no required textbook for this class. Readings and viewings will be shared via our class site.



I expect you to come to class having read the assignments and prepared to interrogate and put to use the ideas in the texts. The ways you prepare for class are essential for what we can accomplish when we are together. When you read the texts in this course, endeavor to apply principles of critical literacy. Reading critically, put simply, is reading beyond surface impressions and easy conclusions. As you read, ask yourself the following kinds of questions:

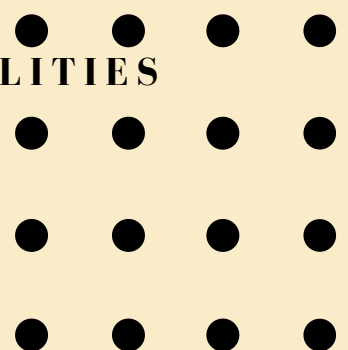
- What meanings and messages in this text seem to be most important to the author, and by what evidence can I judge the author's conclusions? Do I find the message believable or compelling? Why or why not?
- Who is the intended audience for this text and how do I know?
- How should the social, cultural, political and historical contexts of the text influence my reading? How might different readers in different societies at different times understand this text?
- Whom has the author left out or ignored in the text and why? What version (or part) of what larger story is told by this text? What does it emphasize, where are its gaps, and about what does it remain silent?
- Whose knowledge does this author appear to value?
- Whose knowledge is marginalized, devalued, or left out and why?
- How does my race/ethnicity, social class, gender or other identity features affect my response to this text?

Critical Engagement

EQUAL ACCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student in need of a special accommodation should contact 438-5853 (voice) or 438-8620 (TDD).

In addition, students in need of special assistance or an accommodation regarding any of the course requirements are advised to notify me as soon as possible. We will meet privately to discuss appropriate support. Confidentiality will be maintained regarding your special need.



GRADING

PROCEDURES

Learning to make professional decisions and to examine their impact on your teaching and learning are central goals of this class. Assigning letter or number grades does not improve your learning, just as a principal telling a teacher they are doing a poor job—without an explanation as to why—does not make them a better teacher. Thus, letter grades will not be used to assess individual assignments and daily work in the course. I have set up this class so that you can achieve the learning outcomes through informal and formal feedback on your work in progress, and all of your work will be considered in progress until we mutually agree that you have gotten the most out of each assignment given our time and resources.

The emphasis on assessment for this course will be on feedback because it is feedback and not grades that help you achieve your potential as a teacher. Feedback may come from me or it may come from your peers. It will often be in the form of informal class discussions about your work or through individual or group conferences. When your peers or I offer critiques of your draft project, we assume that you will implement the revision suggestions. If you don't, it should be because you have a very good reason in relation to the purpose of the project for not doing so—and you should be prepared to articulate those reasons. My hope is that this freedom from grades and numbers will provide you with the opportunities to take risks in your assignments, while also providing you a forum to get feedback in order to re-envision and revise those drafts.

Because the cycle of feedback and revision encouraged in this class helps ensure that everyone meets the learning targets, your grade at the end of the semester will reflect your participation. So what does participation look like?

- **Attendance:** You are expected to attend every class session unless the schedule indicates that class is not meeting that day. There is really no such thing as an excused or unexcused absence. If you're not in class, regardless of the reason, you are missing the learning activities that occur that day. I realize that extenuating circumstances such as funerals or severe illness can arise, and I will take those into consideration should they arise, but multiple absences regardless of the reason will impact your participation, and thus your learning.
- **Timeliness:** Showing up late, leaving early, or disappearing in the middle of class impacts your participation. If relevant, make sure you are mindful of how long it will take you to get to class from your teaching site and plan accordingly. Timeliness also refers to completing assignments on time. I expect that you will adhere to assignment deadlines as outlined in the syllabus or as announced by me in class.
- **Readiness:** Readiness is different from timeliness in that it relates to being prepared with the necessary materials and mindset when class begins. This includes having completed readings and other daily assignments prior to class.

GRADING

CONTINUED

Thoughtfulness: This trait refers to having a critical awareness during class meetings and as you work on class assignments. This might translate into bringing useful, productive questions or discussion ideas to our attention based upon readings or other assignments; working collegially with your group members; or applying readings or ideas from class deliberately to your own creations. It also means being aware of what and how you are sharing in class. Your contributions should help propel the conversation forward rather than being off-topic or unhelpful.

When determining a final grade, it is important to realize that the efforts we put forth in our daily lives are usually reflective of B or C work. As a colleague observed, we don't often cook gourmet meals. We cook to accomplish the goal of feeding ourselves in a manner that is pleasing to our palates and meets basic nutritional needs. It is only when we deliberately put forward extra effort that we transform our work into something special. It is the same with the work you will do in class. If you approach your work as a student who simply must get an assignment done, it is likely that you will earn a B or C at the end of this semester. However, if you approach the class as a teacher who is passionate about refining your craft and questioning what you think you already know, you will likely earn an A. Your final grade will be determined at the end of the semester through dialogue between the two of us. If you have questions about your performance at any time, please make an appointment with me. If I believe that you are earning below an A or B, I will approach you with my concerns. If you are participating in the basics of the class, you likely only need to focus on your individual goals for earning an A or B.

A B C

The grade of A is reserved for **excellent work**. Excellent work does not equate with showing up every day, participating once in a while, and turning in completed drafts on time or attending to basic revisions. Those are the basic requirements of any class setting, and meeting the basic expectations equates to a C in this academic setting. Here are some ways to earn an A:

Produce excellent assignments. What constitutes excellence? Doing more than simply completing the terms of the assignment. An excellent assignment may meet any number of qualities, depending on its purpose and genre. We'll spend much time analyzing possible qualities for your work, which means you'll be creating evaluation criteria for your own work.

TIPS FOR EARNING AN A

Participate excellently in class. Excellence in class participation means not simply speaking frequently, but participating in all of the ways I mention above. As some examples, you should contribute in an active and generous way to the work of the class as a whole by asking questions, offering interpretations, politely challenging your classmates, graciously accepting challenges in return, and being a productive group member.

Be an excellent citizen-scholar. Specifically, be able to demonstrate (through discussions, group work, and assignment drafts) that you (a) understand and can reflect on the content of this class and show progress toward that knowledge in your work; (b) reason logically, critically, creatively, independently, and consensually, and are able to address issues in a broad and constantly shifting context; (c) recognize different ways of thinking, creating, expressing, and communicating through a variety of media; (d) understand diversity in value systems and cultures in a world that is interdependent with school; and (e) develop a capacity for self-assessment and transferable learning.

Other evidence that indicates that you are working above the basic expectations of the class might be

- having a collegial attitude
- asking for help well in advance of a deadline
- asking your classmates for missed content if you are absent
- staying attentive in class so that I avoid needless repetition
- asking your classmates (or Google) for help with technology, then . . . if stumped, ask me, and wait patiently for help
- understanding that strategic (and sometimes maximum) effort results in excellent work

When working in groups—which is common in education—excellent group members work together, listen to each other's ideas, play to each other's strengths, recognize where there are gaps, seek and use relevant resources, and live up to expected responsibilities from the start of the collaborative project.

REQUIRED & TASKS

SEE DETAILS ON OUR CLASS SITE

Bi-Weekly Readings
Bi-Weekly Discussions
HOMAGO Reflections & Project
7 Challenges
Multidisciplinary Plan



Turning in Your Work

All work should be submitted as directed via either Instagram or your Blog.
DO NOT UPLOAD A WORD DOCUMENT.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is expected in all classroom endeavors.

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student's placement of his or her name on any academic exercise shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student's own thought, effort, and study.

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged appropriation of another's work, words, or ideas in any themes, outlines, papers, reports, or computer programs. Students must ascertain from the instructor in each course the appropriate means of documentation. Submitting the same paper and/or presentation for more than one course is considered a breach of academic integrity unless prior approval is given by the instructors.

Professional Behavior

Since this course is a part of the professional preparation core for teacher candidates, students are expected to behave in a manner consistent with standards for professional environments. This means:

- Communicating in an open, positive, respectful attitude with peers, field site mentors and students, the course instructor, faculty, staff, and administration. Communication in this course includes spoken, nonverbal, digital, written, and electronic media. Appearing in professionally accepted attire that reflects a commitment to the profession of teaching during formal presentations/class leading activities.
- Being a professional takes practice! You are expected to communicate with me and your peers as you would communicate with administrators and teachers. In written communication, specifically in email and any other electronic communication, show respect by addressing the individual as you would in a formal written letter. Use titles like Mr., Ms. or Dr. until directed otherwise. Use a subject when sending an email. In the body of the email, use clear, succinct language and avoid IM abbreviations and spelling errors.

OUR COURSE POLICIES



Online Behavior

Students are expected to behave in a manner consistent with being in a professional environment. Open discussion and disagreement are encouraged in a respectful manner. Open hostility, rudeness, and incivility are discouraged and will result in appropriate action. Students acting in a disruptive or uncivil manner may be dismissed from the class. If necessary, referrals may also be made to Community Rights & Responsibilities for violations of the Code of Student Conduct.



Course Policies

CONTINUED

Open Communication

I look forward to getting to know each of you. While I do not schedule set office hours, I am always open to finding time to meet with you. Please make an appointment to meet with me in my office DeGarmo 253. While I make every effort to respond promptly to messages, please allow 24 hours for a response. If you have not heard from me within 24 hours, feel free to message me again because there is a chance your message is buried.