ED 440: The Teaching of English  
Winter 2011

Course Instructor: Chandra L. Alston  
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Office Hours: T/TH 1:00 – 2:30pm or by appt

Class Meetings: Fridays, 1-4pm  
First day of class: Jan 6  
Last day of class: Apr 13  
No class: March 2

I will use email and CTOOLS extensively to communicate with you and to post and receive assignments and documents for class. Be sure to let me know if internet access will be a problem for you during the course. Weekly readings, handouts, etc. will be posted on CTOOLS prior to class. It is your responsibility to check CTOOLS regularly.

COURSE OVERVIEW

In this course, we will begin a conversation about the purposes for teaching English in public schools with diverse populations. We will cover the teaching of reading, speaking and listening, language, and writing. We will discuss the principles that inform our teaching and explore models of how these might play out in classrooms. Ultimately, I want to help you develop principled practice; that is, I hope your teaching will reflect deep principles about teaching and learning.

The teaching of reading requires both an understanding of general and ELA specific reading strategies. You have begun to build this understanding in your ED 402 class. We will build on those understandings by investigating our own reading practices, those of students in our placements, and how to best support students in becoming better readers of the multiple texts they will encounter in and out of English classes.

As we know, most English courses revolve around whole class discussions as a means of developing student understanding and assessing student comprehension of texts. As such, English teachers must learn how to facilitate discussions that allow access to all learners, actively engage students, and expand their understanding of the content being discussed. Therefore, we will focus on developing our own speaking and listening skills while simultaneously working to develop instructional strategies to help our students do the same.

During a recent research study, my colleagues and I found that teachers whose students consistently improved on standardized tests focused on the teaching of writing. With current dismal scores on writing assessments, and the incorporation of writing on college entrance exams, there is more focus on the teaching of writing - and thankfully so. We will investigate the phases of the writing process and how best to support students as they move through each phase. During our time investigating writing, we will also think about how to teach grammar in the context of writing.

NOTE: Although we will be using and considering English content in this course, this is not an English course. This is a course focused on the teaching of English. It is not enough to be really good at reading, writing, speaking, or listening. It is important that you understand and be able to do those things, but your main objective is to teach your students these skills.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- One recently published (since 1990) Young Adult novel of your choice

All other readings will be posted on CTOOLS.

NOTE: You will be videotaping yourselves at several intervals for methods and practicum. The IT department has flip cameras available for check out. Other courses are also engaging in video records of practice and therefore you will not be the only ones looking to check out flip cameras. If you have access to a camera or can afford to purchase
one, I would suggest that you do so. THIS IS NOT A REQUIREMENT FOR THE COURSE. However, an inability to get a camera to videotape is not a valid excuse, either. Dates for videoing will be set well in advance and as future teachers you will need to manage such issues as reserving limited equipment for your class use. You should also become familiar with the camera you are using to make sure it records correctly, and is positioned to capture the instruction.

ASSIGNMENTS OVERVIEW (full details on CTools)

Assignment 1: Reading Lesson. You will teach a mini-lesson on your assigned reading strategy during practicum. For this assignment, you should draft a lesson plan and prepare to receive feedback from the instructors and your peers. After teaching a mini-lesson on a reading strategy in your practicum, you will analyze the video of your practice, and reflect on your use of the mini-lesson structure. Your reflection should include the specific strengths of your instruction, places you see for growth, and questions you have about the experience. Due January 27

Assignment 2: Unit Plan Overview. Your unit overview will give an outline of the YA unit you will develop over the course of this semester. The unit plan overview should include your Essential Question (EQ), Learning Targets (LTs), and a rationale for the use of the EQ and LTs with the YA text you’ve chosen. This unit should be designed as if you were going to teach it to the students in your current field placement. Hence, you should use the Common Core Standards for the grade level you are currently working with to develop your learning targets. You will choose learning targets for reading, speaking and listening, grammar, and writing. This assignment will become a part of your YA Curriculum Unit. Due February 10

Assignment 3: Writing prompt. Develop a writing prompt to be used as the culminating assignment (summative assessment) for your YA Unit. Based on the writing needs of the students in your current placement, you will design a writing prompt that will allow students to demonstrate their learning of the LTs you have chosen for your unit. This assignment will become a part of your YA unit plan. Due February 24

Assignment 4: Mini-lesson on writing. Create mini-lesson that focuses on an aspect of writing that students need in order to complete your writing prompt successfully. This learning goal for this lesson should be something pivotal to the completion of the writing task and include the aspects of a mini-lesson we’ve covered together in class (modeling, guided practice, etc.). This assignment will become a part of your YA Curriculum Unit. Due March 9

Assignment 5: Gateway Activity. Develop a gateway activity that focuses student attention on a main learning goal (Hillocks, 1995). This will be the opening activity to your YA unit. Many gateway activities focus either on the EQ, or the bigger ideas of the unit, or a specific LT that is core to the unit. Due March 16

Assignment 6: Unit Calendar. Design a 6-week unit of study around your YA novel using the EQ and LTs you’ve decided upon. Consider each day’s focus (what students will learn and/or be able to do as a result) and the activities (lectures, mini-lessons, guided practice, independent practice, role plays, skits, group work, small group or whole class discussions, SSR, etc.) that will be a part of the day’s lesson. The activities should include enough description that it is clear what is happening during the day’s lesson. (Examples will be examined in class and available on CTOOLS). This assignment will become a part of your YA Curriculum Unit. Due March 23

Assignment 7: Two consecutive lesson plans. One lesson plan should focus on either the teaching of a specific reading, or speaking and listening strategy. The two lessons should build and demonstrate your understanding of sequencing instruction. This assignment will become a part of your YA Curriculum Unit.

Assignment 8: Discussion Lesson Reflection and Video Clip. You will choose a specific facilitation strategy we’ve discussed in class that you feel will help your class have richer whole class discussions. You will design a lesson using our lesson plan structure where you introduce the strategy, model its use, offer guided practice and then use this strategy during a whole class discussion of some text. The discussion part of the lesson should be at least 10 minutes and focus on the discussion a piece of text. You will videotape your lesson and reflect on your instruction and student participation and learning in the lesson. Due April 6
Assignment 9: YA Curriculum Unit. Your final assignment will be to revise and resubmit each part of the unit plan previously drafted. In addition, you will also submit a rubric for your writing prompt. The unit should include your unit overview, gateway activity, calendar, two consecutive lessons, writing mini-lesson, writing prompt, and rubric. Due April 17

**Written reflections**: For written reflections, you are expected to examine your own performance of practice. There is a natural tendency to avoid discussing the challenges you faced or things that did not go well. However, part of the process of growing is to identify and consider concrete and specific ways of addressing these areas. Failure to examine areas of struggle or uncertainty will reflect negatively in your grade. At the same time, in order for a written reflection to be “thorough,” it must also address your successes and areas you have grown. Bringing in our class discussions and readings as you propose your next steps is also important in demonstrating your understanding of how theory impacts practice.

**Reading commentaries**: Reading for an education class is not like reading for an English class. As you read, you should synthesize the main points of the article and consider them in relation to what you see in schools and have learned from other ED courses. Each week’s readings will focus on a particular theme of teaching ELA. For each week’s readings, I have included reading questions to help scaffold our whole class discussion. You should post brief answers in the CTOOLS dropbox by 8am Friday. These should be complete answers to the questions, but no more than ½ to ¾ of a page is necessary in most cases to answer the questions.

**PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS**
As you’ve probably already noted, you will receive a grade for professional expectations. I have delineated here what I mean by this term and the aspects that will contribute to your grade.

**Attendance**: You are expected to attend every class session.

**Punctuality**: You are expected to arrive to class on time and to submit assignments on time. We will begin each class 10 minutes after the hour to allow for transition between classes. Unless otherwise stated, all assignments are to be posted on the course CTOOLS site before class begins (before 1pm on the Friday an assignment is due).

**Participation**: You are expected to listen actively to the perspectives of others and share your own. Sharing your ideas in class is critical for our learning. I recognize that it is easier for some people than others to speak out in class. Though you are not expected to talk all the time, you are expected to participate consistently and thoughtfully.

**Electronics Etiquette**: I ask that all electronic devices be off during class time except during breaks (get your fix!) and when electronics are explicitly integrated into assignments (e.g. you must use video equipment to present video clips of your field enactments). For students who use laptops to take notes, refer to articles during class discussions, etc. I request that you NOT access the web during class. And, yes, having your email or Facebook browsers open but minimized still counts as accessing the web.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment No.</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Dates (tentative)</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Reading lesson reflection and Video Clip</td>
<td>Jan 27</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Unit Plan Overview and Rationale</td>
<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Unit Plan Culminating Writing Prompt</td>
<td>Feb 24</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Writing Mini-Lesson</td>
<td>Mar 9</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Unit Plan Gateway Activity</td>
<td>Mar 16</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Unit Plan Calendar</td>
<td>Mar 23</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Unit Plan Lesson Plans</td>
<td>Mar 30</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Discussion Lesson Reflection and Video Clip</td>
<td>Apr 6</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Unit Plan</td>
<td>Apr 17</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading commentaries</td>
<td>Each Week</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Professional Expectations</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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**Electronic Submissions:** Submit all assignments (except for video – see below) on CTOOLS. Label your files with your uniqname, assignment number, followed by ED440 (e.g., clalstonAssignment1ED440.doc). If an assignment includes many parts, **please combine them into a single document** for submission rather than submitting several documents. Please do not email assignments. Note that I will not be able to read files with the wps or cwk extensions. Your options include PDF or Microsoft Word (doc/docx). Reading commentaries should be labeled with your uniqname, class week number, followed by ED440 (e.g., clalstonWeek1ED440.doc).

**Video Submissions:** You will submit video recordings of enactments to accompany the documents you submit on CTOOLS. We will be using Dropbox to upload these video clips. During class, we will review how to upload files onto this system, file naming expectations, and how to identify time codes. You should label all video with your uniqname, assignment number, followed by ED440 (e.g., clalstonAssignment1ED440.mp4).

**Grading:** Everyone begins this course with a perfect score; failure to meet the above expectations will result in the lowering of your score. If you know in advance that you will be unable to meet any of these expectations at any point during the semester (will miss a class, need an extension), please to notify me by email or in class to discuss your circumstances and possible accommodations/arrangements (getting handouts from a class you will miss, planning an assignment extension date). If you are unable to submit an assignment on time, contact me by email **preferably no later than 48 hours prior** to the due date to discuss adjusting the deadline. I understand that emergencies arise and life happens. Extension requests that are received after mid-day Wednesday (for a Friday due date) will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

**Grading Scale:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>75-79</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td>Must retake course and may not student teach until earning a grade higher than C</td>
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Tentative Calendar

Week 1 - January 6
Focus: Introductions; a theory of teaching
Readings: “Eleven” by Sandra Cisneros before Jan 20

Week 2 - January 13
Focus: The mini-lesson structure; Teaching strategies for reading
Readings Discussed: Schoenbach, et al., chs. 5 and 7
Reading Questions: What features do reciprocal teaching and the reading apprenticeship approach have in common? Why do Schoenbach, et al. argue for explicitly teaching cognitive reading strategies? Teacher think alouds are a way of modeling reading strategies, what purposes does this serve for students?
Assignment Due: Schedule discussion lesson date with CT

Week 3 - January 20
Focus: Designing Units of Study; Backwards Design; Unpacking the Standards
Readings Discussed: Marshall & Beach; Wiggins & McTighe, ch. 1; Review Common Core Standards for your placement grade level.
Reading Questions: Which CCS seem to fit well with “Eleven”? In other words, which standards could be taught using “Eleven” as a text? Use Fig 1.2 on p22 in W&McT to work through ideas for teaching “Eleven”. Come to class prepared to share this. What do you think of as the core parts of planning after reading M&B and W&McT?
Assignment Due: Let me know which YA novel you’ve chosen. Start reading your YA novel

Week 4 - January 27
Focus: Developing Students’ Speaking and Listening skills
Readings Discussed: Wilhelm, ch. 5; Huss; Ruff
Reading Questions: What questions for a whole class discussion would you develop for “Eleven”? For Ruff? What might be your goal for a discussion of this text? Wilhelm argues that teachers must teach the skills of discussion. Do you agree/disagree? Why? Do you recall ever being explicitly taught discussion skills?
Assignment Due: Reading Lesson reflection and video clip

Week 5 - February 3
Focus: Setting goals, Essential Questions
Readings Discussed: Wiggins & McTighe, ch. 3 and 5; model unit plan (unit overview only)
Reading Questions: What is the need for having an EQ and LTs? Begin to draft out the LTs and EQ for your YA unit. What are the overarching themes of the text? What big questions are being addressed? What skills and strategies do students need to read and makes sense of the text(s) you’ve chosen? What is your text useful for teaching? In other words, are there certain skills, strategies, genres, writing craft that the author(s) use that you could use this opportunity to teach students?
Assignment Due: Finish reading YA novel before Feb 10

Week 6 - February 10**
Focus: Designing Writing Prompts and Rubrics
Readings Discussed: Wiggins & McTighe, p.161-190; Popham
Reading Questions: Did you use rubrics in your high school ELA classes? What experiences do you have with them? What questions do you have about creating and using them? What concerns, questions, etc do you have after reading Popham?
Assignment Due: Unit Overview (text rationale, essential question, and learning targets)

Week 7 - February 17**
Focus: Teaching Writing; Gray Areas of Grading; Mid-Course Evaluations
Readings Discussed: Romano, ch 4; Atwell, ch. 6; VanDeWeghe
Reading Questions: Did you experience the Romano “Due Friday” model of writing in high school? If so, what did you learn to do on your own to develop your writing? If no, what kinds of writing instruction did you experience? What are the assumptions Atwell and Romano are making about writing, writing development, students, and the teaching of writing? Thinking about your unit plan, what mini-lessons might you teach, and why?

Week 8 - February 24
Focus: Teaching Grammar; Student Language Diversity
Readings Discussed: Weaver; Schleppegrel & Go; Christenbury
**Reading Questions:** How might you use “Eleven” to teach a grammar concept? Be specific about the concept and the goal of the lesson and why you think “Eleven” would be useful. What does Schleppegrell make you consider about writing with diverse students that you may not have considered before? What impact will this have on your planning and instruction? What are your reactions to the ideas regarding student language by Christenbury?

**Assignment Due:** Writing prompt (culminating assignment for unit)

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**March 2 NO class – Enjoy your break!**

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**Week 9 - March 9**

**Focus:** Gateway Activities; Text sets  
**Readings Discussed:** Hillocks, ch. 8; Tatum  
**Reading Questions:** Define a gateway activity in your own words. What ideas do you have for a gateway activity for your unit? Considering Tatum, what supplementary texts might you include in your unit to help students reach the learning targets you’ve set and answer the essential question?  
**Assignment Due:** Writing mini-lesson

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**Week 10 - March 16**

**Focus:** Sequencing; Planning (Calendars)  
**Readings Discussed:** Hillocks, ch. 9; Wiggins & McTighe, ch. 9  
**Reading Questions:** What are the Hillocks’ principles for sequencing instruction? How do these principles map onto our mini-lesson structure? W&McT focus their attention now to learning activities, use their organizer (Fig 9.2, p 194) to begin to map out the activities you will need in your YA unit. In considering the characteristics of the best designs the authors list, which ones did you realize would need to be in your unit? Which ones had you not considered? Which are you struggling to figure out how to include? What other insights about planning did you take away from these chapters?  
**Assignment Due:** Gateway Activity

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**Week 11 - March 23**

**Focus:** Lesson planning  
**Readings Discussed:** Wiggins & McTighe, ch. 10 - 11  
**Reading Questions:** What do the authors mean by “coverage vs. uncoverage”? Where in your unit do you feel you are moving toward uncoverage? Where do you still need to focus some attention? What is the Expert Blind Spot (EBS) and why is it problematic for teachers? What are ways you can think of to avoid EBS? Which dilemma(s) in design are you struggling with most? Which had you not considered? Which do you feel you’ve resolved for yourself?  
**Assignment Due:** Calendar (Might be helpful to use the template in ch. 11 to help you flesh out your unit and begin to think of tasks and activities to complete your calendar).

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**Week 12 - March 30**

**Focus:** Peer and Teacher Conferencing  
**Readings Discussed:** VanDeWeghe; Romano, ch. 7  
**Reading Questions:** Before reading VanDeWeghe, had you considered explicit teaching of peer review skills to your students? How might you incorporate this into your unit plan? What principles about teacher conferencing did you glean from Romano? What questions do you still have?  
**Assignment due:** Lesson plans

**April Teaching Demonstrations (4th or 11th, 6-8pm)**

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**Week 13 - April 6**

**Focus:** Unit plan workshop; Teaching Demonstration feedback  
**Assignment due:** Discussion lesson reflection and video clip

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**Week 14 - April 13**

Last class celebration/Course Evaluations

**Make sure to bring unit plan materials with you on these days. We will spend time in class workshopping these materials.**