Literacy & Language Arts in the Upper Elementary and Middle School Classroom
EDUC 403, Section 1, Winter 2014

Course Instructor: Carrie Symons
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Class Locations and Time
School of Education Room 2229
• Tuesdays: 8:30am-11:30am
• Thursday, Feb 20th & Thursday, April 10th: 9:00am – 11:30am (room 2218)
Scarlett Middle School, 3300 Lorraine Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48108; (734) 997-1220
• Tuesdays March 11th, 18th & 25th (8:00am – 11:30am) - these 3 early start days will be
  compensated for on the two Thursdays above and the last day of class Tuesday, April 15th,
  which will start at 9:00am.

Please note: If Ann Arbor Public Schools are closed due to weather on a day when we are scheduled to meet at
Scarlett Middle School, we will meet from 8:30 to 11:30 in room 2229 at the School of Education.

Course Description
This course focuses on designing comprehensive, balanced, and engaging literacy programs that
advance the learning of a broad range of children in 3rd-8th grade classrooms. The literacy methods
courses are meant to be as comprehensive as possible while also providing depth of understanding of
essential principles of learning and teaching. Our goals for these courses emerge from current and
historical research, theories, and the experiences of thoughtful, dedicated educators.

As children proceed through the grades, the expectation is that they will independently use reading and
writing for the purposes of developing knowledge of subject matter (e.g., science, social studies, and
mathematics), literature, the world, and themselves. Thus, when students reach the upper elementary
and middle school grades, our attention as literacy educators is increasingly focused on: comprehension,
 vocabulary, fluency, and composition so that our students have the tools and dispositions to construct
meaning through reading, writing, viewing, and speaking.

In this course, we want you to learn how to:
• Cultivate a holistic understanding of language arts, literacy instruction and literacy learning for
  upper elementary/adolescent learners;
• Think about the design and organization of a literacy curriculum in disciplinary/thematic/genre-
  based units and across a school year; and
• Create a classroom environment where students learn how to think, offer opinions, question, take
  ownership of their literacy and develop the necessary skills for a literate life.

1 The syllabus and overall course design for EDUC 403 draws heavily on the on-going teaching and research of Dr. Gina Cervetti, Dr. Debi Khasnabis, Dr. Linda Kucan, Dr. Annemarie Palincsar, Dr. Cathy Reischl, and Dr. Kristine Schutz.
Course Logistics

**Personal technology use:** Appropriate use of electronic devices is also a part of your professional participation in our class. Using laptops or cell phones as tools for your learning is acceptable, as long as it is not distracting to your colleagues or your instructor. Examples of acceptable use of electronic devices include making records of your practice and consulting resources for work in class. Non-instructional use (e.g. texting, phone calls, social networking, shopping) of these devices is not acceptable in this class at any time, and will result in a reduction in your participation grade.

**Communication:** Email will be used extensively as a form of communication in this course. Please check your email frequently for course announcements. You are encouraged to contact the instructors as needed via email. Please direct emails to our joint email: carrieandwill@umich.edu.

**Owning your work and citing the work of others:** You will draw on multiple resources as you complete assignments for this course—readings, conversations with peers and colleagues, Internet resources, and your experiences. When you write lessons or other assignments for this class, you MUST provide citations and attributions for the work of others included in your written work. This includes references or resources in any media form you used. *All assignments must be completed independently unless collaboration is specified in the assignment directions.* As a professional practice, you should footnote and succinctly describe and attribute ideas that were generated in conversation with others.

**Professional dress:** When class takes place at Scarlett Middle School, please dress professionally (i.e. the type of attire you would wear to your field placements).

**Accommodations:** Please talk with me if you require accommodations for religious practices, learning disabilities, physical requirements, medical needs or any other reason. We will work together to identify resources and make accommodations.

Course Assignments & Grading

**Assignment Guidelines and Due Dates:** Please make sure that all written work is double-spaced with 12 point, Times New Roman font with 1” borders. We expect that all assignments for this course will be turned in on time. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from turning in an assignment on time, please contact me via email prior to the submission deadline. Late assignments will be marked down one grade (from A+ to A to A- to B+ to B, etc.) for each day that it is late. Unexcused late work will impact your grade in correspondence with how late the work is submitted. You must receive a C or better in each of your courses to remain in the program. *Detailed instructions will be provided for each of the following assignments.*

**Class attendance and participation (30 points)** You are expected to attend every class, *arrive on time and prepared*, and participate actively in all course activities. Participation will be assessed in terms of your active engagement in our discussions, your support of the work of others, your thoughtfulness, and your willingness to take intellectual risks with your scholarship. While illness and emergencies do occasionally arise, please make every effort to be at class. Unexcused absences are not permitted and are grounds for failing the course. If you must miss class due to religious holidays, please coordinate this with the instructor by the end of the second week of the course. Please do not come to class if you are sick. If you must be absent, you should contact me by email prior to class. It is your responsibility to make arrangements to get the information you missed in class; contact a classmate who can collect handouts for you and explain what you missed.

If you must miss class for any reason, you will need to write a **two-page summary** of the assigned readings. This summary will be due 48 hours after class. This is the only way to earn participation points when you are absent. Excused absences will be considered unexcused if you fail to submit this paper, and 10 points will be deducted from your participation grade. It is your responsibility to submit this paper electronically by the due date without reminders from the course instructors.
SOE-based Assignments

**Reading Responses (5 points each)** These will be short written responses to the weekly readings. Reading guides and prompts for the responses will be provided.

**Writing Mini lesson Simulation (30 points)** Plan for, enact, video and analyze your teaching of a writing mini lesson. The content of the lesson will grow out of your instructional queries/interests, the readings on the writing workshop and observations of your students in your field placement. You will enact Lucy Calkins’ four-part architecture of a minilesson: Connect, Teach, Engage and Link. The whole lesson should last 10-20 minutes. You will reflect on your teaching by revisiting your plan, viewing the video and analyzing your enactment.

**Final Project: Anchor Text Unit (40 points)** Using a picture book as an anchor text, you will develop an integrated reading and writing unit including the following components:

- Driving questions/standards-based learning goals (reading, writing, speaking, and listening goals)
- Backwards planning
  - What do you want students to be able to do/know at the end of this unit?
  - How will you know they can do this? How will they demonstrate this knowledge?
- Text analysis (including genre features) for the purposes of reading comprehension instruction and author’s craft study
- Unit plan outline
- 2 sample lesson plans (including considerations and accommodations for English learners)

A grading rubric and further details for this assignment will be provided.

Field-based Assignments

**Text-based Discussion Lesson (30 points)** Plan for, enact and analyze your teaching of a whole class, text-based discussion lesson. Using an informational text, you will share this whole class teaching experience with the other intern in your field placement classroom. You will be responsible for teaching half of the text and observing your classmate teach the other half. Analysis of your teaching will be guided by rubrics to assess your plan, launch, reader-text interactions and exit.

**Scarlett Middle School-based Assignments**

**Sci Fi (Dystopian) Novel Book Club Teaching and Analysis (60 points)** For three class sessions, we will meet at Scarlett Middle School to partner with Ellen Daniel and Sal Barrientes, AAPS eighth grade language arts teachers. On the first day (March 11th), you will work collaboratively to facilitate learning centers. On the following days (March 18th & 25th), you and a partner will co-facilitate a book club meeting with a small group of 4-7 students. The students in your small group will be 8th grade language arts students who are reading a young adult, dystopian novel (*Uglies*, *Ender’s Game* or *The Last Book in the Universe*). You will facilitate discussion around the text, related writing activities, and the use of educational technology to support language arts learning. You will be responsible for creating detailed lesson plans for your book club sessions, contributing to students’ Schoology discussions, and completing a structured analysis of your teaching in the form of a memo.

**Required Texts**


Course Outline

Feb 11  
**Introduction to Course & Reading Comprehension**  
SoE 2229  
What is literacy? What is literacy pedagogy? What is reading comprehension?  
Readings:  
Kucan, L. & Palincsar, A. S. (2013) Ch 1, p.3-14  
Due:  
Reading response (bring to class)  

Feb 18  
**Reading Comprehension Instruction**  
SoE 2229  
How do text-based discussions support reading comprehension?  
What do teachers need to know to implement an effective TBD?  
Readings:  
Due:  
Reading response (Submit in your Ctools drop box)  

Thursday, Feb 20  
**Genre & Technology**  
9:00 Start SoE 2218  
What is the purpose of the narrative genre? What could a sci fi genre study look like? In what ways can technology enhance, engage and extend learning in the context of the science fiction genre?  
Readings:  
Science fiction book (1st half)  
Due (Sunday, Feb 23):  
Text-based discussion lesson plan (Submit in your Ctools drop box)  

Feb 25  
**Multimodal Book Clubs & Text Analysis**  
SoE 2229  
How can literature serve as a springboard for discussion? What do teachers need to know about texts in order to teach from them? How can book clubs be multimodal?  
Readings:  
Science fiction book (read more)  
Due:  
Sci Fi Center lesson plan (**Bring to class**)
March 4  
**UM Break – NO CLASS**

Read:  

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March 11  
**Thematic Centers & Hands-on Learning**

8:00AM at Scarlett  
What are the affordances and limitations to alternative structures for literacy learning? How can a multimodal learning environment support reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing?

Readings:  
Science fiction book (read completely)


Ch 17, p. 277-294 (PDF)

Schoology posts

Due:  
Text-based discussion teaching analysis (Submit to Ctools drop box)

Due (Sunday, March 16):  
Book Club 1 Lesson Plan (Submit in your Ctools drop box)

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March 18  
**Leading Book Clubs 1: The Language of Facilitation**

8:00AM at Scarlett  
How do you facilitate the co-construction of meaning? How do you support student ownership of ideas while keeping the conversation rooted in the text?

Readings:  
Ch 11, 12 & 13 (PDF) p. 190-222 on Guided Reading

Kucan, L. & Palincsar, A. S. p. 148-149

Schoology posts

Due (Sunday, March 23):  
Book Club 2 Lesson Plan (Submit in your Ctools drop box)

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March 25  
**Leading Book Clubs 2: Getting at What Students Know**

8:00AM at Scarlett  
In what ways, other than talking, can you elicit students’ thinking? How can discussion serve as a support for writing and writing serve as a support for reading comprehension?

Readings:  
Ray, K. W., & Laminack, L. L. (2001). Ch 1, 2, 3

Due (March 30):  
Text-based Discussion Analysis Due (Ctools & Edthena)
April 1  The Writing Process & Language Learning
SoE 2229
How does the writing process provide a meaningful context for engagement and the application of skills? What are the functions and purposes of writing? How can writing support language and literacy development?

Readings:


Due:
Sci Fi Teaching Analysis Due (Ctools & Edthena)

April 8  The Writing Workshop
SoE 2229
What is the purpose and structure of a writer’s workshop? How do you balance student choice with instructional goals? How do you attend to both the individual child and the whole class in a writer’s workshop?

Readings:


Thursday, April 10  Assessing Writers & Writing Units
9:00 SoE 2218
How can the 6+1 rubric inform our analysis and assessment of students’ writing? How does writing differ across grade levels? How can backwards planning shape a writing unit?

Readings:
TBD

Due (Sun, April 13):
Submit Writing Minilesson Plan (Ctools)

April 15  Final Project Presentations
9:00 SoE 2229
How does an anchor text support students’ literacy development? How do the use of essential questions and backwards planning serve as tools for cohesive unit design? How does thinking about individual students’ needs influence the design of unit based on a whole class, common text?

Readings:
None

Due:
Final Project Presentation

Due (April 22):
Writing Minilesson Analysis Due (Ctools & Edthena)

Due (April 25):
Final Project Due (submit to Ctools)
### Timeline of Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>Reading Response 1 (bring to class)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>Reading Response 2 (Ctools)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>Submit Text-based Discussion Lesson Plan (Ctools)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 25, 27, Mar 11 or 13</td>
<td>Text-based Discussion Lesson (whole class, in field)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>Sci Fi Centers Plan Due (bring to class)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 11</td>
<td><strong>Sci Fi Centers at Scarlett Middle School</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>Sci Fi Book Club Lesson Plan 1 Due (Ctools)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 18</td>
<td><strong>Sci Fi Book Club 1 at Scarlett at Scarlett Middle School</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 23</td>
<td>Sci Fi Book Club Lesson Plan 2 Due (Ctools)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 25</td>
<td><strong>Sci Fi Book Club 1 at Scarlett at Scarlett Middle School</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 30</td>
<td>Text-based Discussion Analysis Due (Ctools &amp; Edthena)</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Sci Fi Analysis Due (Ctools &amp; Edthena)</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 13</td>
<td>Submit Writing Minilesson Plan (Ctools)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 15 - 20</td>
<td><strong>Writing Minilesson (record video of your simulation)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Final Anchor Text Project Presentation (in class)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>Writing Minilesson Analysis Due (Ctools &amp; Edthena)</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 25</td>
<td>Final Anchor Text Project Due (Ctools)</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>30</td>
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**Total possible points** 200

### Course grading

Grades will be determined using the following scale:

- 195-200 = A+
- 189-194 = A
- 183-188 = A-
- 177-182 = B+
- 171-176 = B
- 165-170 = B-
- 159-164 = C+
- 153-158 = C
- 147-152 = C-
- 141-146 = D+

You must receive a C or better in each of your courses to remain in the program. Late assignments will be marked down one grade (from A+ to A to A- to B+ to B, etc.) for each day that it is late.

*The instructor of this course reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus.*