

**Week One**

**Introduction:** Welcome to English 5339, Introduction to English Education. In this course we will explore many of the various components that comprise the world of English Education. To that end, we will read, consider, and discuss texts that focus on: theories and concepts regarding the nature of teaching literature to adolescents;

- ideas and techniques for considering, or reconsidering, how to read, understand, and appreciate poetry;
- concepts about, and strategies for, supporting student writers, many of whom “struggle” with an assorted types and genres of text construction;
- theories and strategies for helping students learn to read and comprehend texts in the content areas;
- ideas and strategies for thinking about and developing effective units and curricular plans in English/Language Arts;
- and ideas and strategies for understand the nature of inferences, the specific number of inferences that people can make, and way to teach students how to develop and apply inferencing skills.

As you peruse and reflect upon the texts in this course, it is my hope that you will discover new ways to think about why you teach, how you think about teaching, how you think about pedagogical theory, poetry, writing, nonfiction, and cognition (thinking skills). Emily Dickinson wrote that she knew she was reading poetry when she felt the top of her head had been blown off (what a grand metaphor: to have the experience that words, organized in the right way, can cause one to have an explosively powerful visceral response; this is a wonderful example of what Nathaniel Hawthorne referred to as “conjoining the heart and head”. As such, I hope that some, if not all, of the texts we read and discuss this semester will afford you an occasion — or occasions! — to, if not have your “head blown off” by words, to at least have the socks jazzed off your feet.

Before we begin reading the texts for the class, I invite you to do two things first, things that will serve as a preamble to the course:

*First*, please read the **entire syllabus**, paying careful attention to the particulars of the **class policies** and to the calendar of **due dates**. Two important policy

statements are deal with *the negative consequences of failing to submit two or more blogs, and failing to submit the annotated bibliography* (sorry to have to focus on the negative so soon in the course, but it is critical that you thoroughly comprehend class policies; that way you will be able to organize yourself and position yourself so that you can succeed in this course, which, of course, is my goal and aspiration for each of you).

*Second*, read and respond to (as blog posting) **one** of the quotations I have included in the Week One Module. I have tried to choose quotations that are engaging and evocative, ones that will cause your mind to be a' swarming with thoughts.

### **Objectives**

- To read and understand the syllabus and class calendar
- To read and understand the polices that attend ENGL 5339
- To construct and posit questions, or thoughts about, the syllabus, class policies, and/or the class calendar
- To read, reflect upon, and respond to a specific quotation

### **Week Two**

#### **Introduction**

This week we will begin reading and discussing *Teaching Literature to Adolescents*:

Each chapter is organized around specific questions that English educators often hear in working with preservice teachers. The text engages readers in considering the authentic dilemmas and issues facing literature teachers through inquiry-based responses to authentic narratives.

—*from the front page of the text*

We will also listen and respond to the TED Radio Hour (click on the link in the module for Week Two), which asks the question: “Should we stop telling our kids they’re smart?” As you listen to the program, think about the efficacy of each speaker’s assertions and philosophical positions, then think about, based on what you have heard,

you own philosophy of teaching — and the manner in which you interact with your students.

### **Objectives**

To reflect upon and come to conclusions about what it means to teach literature to adolescents

- To come to a better understanding of the nature of the adolescent learner
- To learn how to decide what kinds of texts to teach
- To understand what the literary canon is and what texts to teach from it
- To learn how to teach contemporary adolescent literature
- To learn how to think about and teach media analysis
- To learn the positive and negative dynamics of being an external source of children's self image
- To consider and express one's own teaching philosophy

### **Week Three**

#### **Introduction**

This week we will continue reading and discussing *Teaching Literature to Adolescents*.

We will also listen and respond to the TED Radio Hour (click on the link in the module for Week Three), which focuses on the nature of “beauty”. As you listen and prepare to respond, think about these questions:

- what is “beauty”? how do you know? what is the epistemological basis for your understanding of beauty? is there an ontological basis for beauty, or is beauty the result or manifestation of social constructivism?
- what is the role of beauty in education?
- how can beauty, as discussed in the TED Radio hour, enhance your pedagogy?
- why is beauty necessary in education, especially in this era of the STAAR?
- what do you find beautiful about teaching and learning?

**Objectives**

To continue to reflect upon and come to conclusions about what it means to teach literature to adolescents, and to consider the nature of “beauty” in itself and its role in contemporary pedagogy

- To come to a better understanding of your role in helping students develop stronger comprehension skills
- To learn how to teach across a spectrum of genres
- To understand the role of multi-perspectivism in the classroom
- To understand the importance of creating an intersection of drama and literature
- To understand how to promote effective classroom discussions of literature
- To understand how to help students become more effective writers when they write about literature
- To understand the nature and dynamics of evaluation
- To reflect upon the nature of how to “grow” as a teacher

**Week Four****Introduction**

“Painting is poetry that is seen rather than felt, and poetry is painting that is felt rather than seen.”  
— Leonardo da Vinci

“One ought, every day at least, to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture, and, if it were possible, to speak a few reasonable words.”  
— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*

This week we will begin reading and discussing *How to Read and Fall in Love with Poetry*. I have chosen this particular text, among a myriad of texts (“texts, texts, everywhere, and nary a word to read . . . !” to paraphrase and invert Coleridge) as a happy and hopeful introduction to the essence and configurations of poetry.

Besides teaching at UTEP, I also give professional presentations at region, state, and national meetings, and inservice workshops (literacy, vocabulary, grammar, higher order reading, writing, content area reading, math and language arts, language arts and social studies, oral language and drama, and poetry) for K-12 teachers. One question I am

asked repeatedly is: “how can we get students to like and understand poetry?” It has thus been my experience, in working with both teachers and students, that poetry is often perceived — and experienced, sadly — as something oblique and troublesome (sort of like trying to eat a sandwich in a sandstorm), so it is my hope that the Hirsch text may serve to make what was oblique clear and what was troublesome joyful.

We will also listen and respond to the TED Radio Hour (click on the link in the module for Week Four), which focuses on the nature of “adaptation”. As you listen and prepare to respond, consider these questions:

- what adaptations do you need to make to become more effective as a teacher?
- how can you help your students make the requisite adaptations to become more successful learners?
- when have you made successful adaptations?
- when have you had difficulty making adaptations (in the classroom)?

### **Objectives**

- To consider poetry from myriad and deepening perspectives
- To understand how to become receptive to poetry
- To understand the nature of “poiesis”
- To understand the roles of connection and disconnection in the realm of poetics
- To understand and experience three different kinds of “initiations” into the world of poetry
- To understand the nature and dynamics of adaptation
- To connect ideas about adaptation to personal experience

## Week Five

### Introduction

“Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility.”  
—William Wordsworth

“Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things.”  
—T.S. Eliot

Clearly, Eliot is taking issue with Wordsworth, to the point of being philosophically and aesthetically opposed to him . . . and so, we see that poets often radically disagree with other poets.

This week we will continue reading and discussing *How to Read and Fall in Love with Poetry*. (I hope you are enjoying this text. Since Hirsch covers a good deal of territory in his discussion of poetry, my recommendation is to read this text slowly and carefully; give yourself time to become open to what Hirsch has to say about poetry. Once you have done so, then adjudicate the efficacy of his disquisition.)

We will also listen and respond to the TED Radio Hour (click on the link in the module for Week Five), which focuses on the nature of “unstoppable learning”. As you listen and prepare to respond, consider these questions:

- how you can you make learning “unstoppable” in your classroom?
- what is necessary to make learning unstoppable?
- what are the barriers to unstoppable learning?

### Objectives

- To understand what Hirsch considers to be authentic poetry
- To reflect upon the nature of poetic authenticity
- To learn to see how poetry is fundamentally dramatic
- To learn to read poetry first for its mysteries and second for its particulars, that is, having the experience of poetry before the analysis of it

- To understand the effects of war on the poetics of Polish poets
- To understand the nature and dynamics of unstoppable learning
- To connect ideas about unstoppable learning to personal experience

## Week Six

### Introduction

“Modesty is a virtue not often found among poets, for almost every one of them thinks himself the greatest in the world.”

—Miguel de Cervantes

“Poets aren’t very useful. / Because they aren’t consumeful or very produceful.”

—Ogden Nash

If for Ilan Stavans the “tension between double attachments” is the “core,” Elena Minor’s statement envisions, in my view, the possibility that said “double attachment,” for some Latin@ writers, may not exist. Another way of putting it: “double attachment” may be the name of another box some Latin@ poets will resist being placed in.

—Francisco Aragón

This week we will finish our reading and discussing of *How to Read and Fall in Love with Poetry*.

We will also listen and respond to the TED Radio Hour (click on the link in the module for Week Six), which focuses on “the source of creativity”. As you listen and prepare to respond, consider these questions:

- what is creativity?
- how can you make your teaching more creative?
- what are the hindrances to creativity in education?
- why does education seem to eschew creativity?

### Objectives

- To understand the nature and necessity of poetic forms
- To understand the role of “revelation” (“spots of time,” “epiphanies”) in poetry
- To understand how, from Hirsch’s perspective, the “soul” is central to poetry

- To understand Hirsch's central argument: that poetry is participatory and that it is a radically democratic and egalitarian idea as well as a loving and agnostic literary one
- To understand the source of creativity
- To think about how to apply creativity to classroom practices

## **Week Seven**

### **Introduction**

This week we will shift gears and, instead of reading and responding to text, we will be making creative connections among words and images. We will, however, be employing a text: *Vocabulary Cartoons, SAT Word Power*.

**Directions:** Complete both # 1 and # 2.

- 1) Choose 8 words from *Vocabulary Cartoons, SAT Word Power*. Pair them. Make a photograph of something in El Paso that represents 2 words (8 words, 4 photographs). Create a powerpoint presentation of the words & photographs. On one slide should be the photography of the item that exemplifies the words. On the next slide should be the photograph of the item, the words, the definitions of the words, and a brief explanation of how the photograph represents the words (be sure to tell where/what the item in the photograph is and use the definitions of the words in the explanation).

**NB:** *see the attached powerpoint as an example.*

- 2) Write a 3 page essay explaining what you learned or discovered by engaging in this activity.

We will *not* be listening and responding to the TED Radio Hour this week.

### **Objectives**

- To use often under-used words in a new capacity
- To employ analytical and associative thinking
- To see how words can recontextualize thinking and interpreting
- To construct effective, explanatory sentences

## Week Eight

### Introduction

This week we will read and discuss of *Literacy for Real*. This book “centers on classroom practices and strategies for helping students tackle the reading required for subject-area study” —*from the back cover of the book*

We will also listen and respond to the TED Radio Hour (click on the link in the module for Week Eight), which focuses on “everything is connected”. As you listen and prepare to respond, consider these questions:

- how are the various aspects of your curriculum are connected?
- what sorts of connections you can make in your classroom to enhance learning
- why is making connections among disparate, or seemingly disparate aspects of the content you teach important (eg., why is it important, for instance, to connect poetry to nonfiction?)?

### Objectives

- To understand how to create “engagement” in student reading
- To learn how to build appropriate backgrounds for various readings
- To learn how to construct meaning when reading
- To understand how and where to use word study in the context of content area reading
- To understand how to teach reading for deeper understanding
- To understand the intersection of reading and thinking (critically)
- To understand the nature of online reading
- To understand how to expand reading across content areas
- To understand the essence of what it is to make connections

## Week Nine

### Introduction

This week we will read and discuss the first half of *Strategies for Struggling Writers*.

**NB:** *the book is NOT available in the UTEP Bookstore, but you can find used, and inexpensive, copies on Amazon.com.*

*Strategies for Struggling Writers* is “about helping students who have difficulties with writing. The book focuses on secondary students and English classes, but its message is relevant for teachers in every classroom where students struggle literacy learning [this book is also appropriate, and will be helpful, for teachers whose students whose first language is not English]. The message is an encouraging one: Struggle writers benefit greatly from collaborative assistance that focuses on helping them to think strategically about writing” (vii).

We will also listen and respond to the TED Radio Hour (click on the link in the module for Week Nine), which focuses on “the hero’s journey”. As you listen and prepare to respond, consider these questions:

- how is teaching writing a “heroic” activity?
- how can you empower your students by making learning a heroic adventure?
- how must attitudes change to envision writing as an heroic activity?

### Objectives

- To understand how students acquire and employ language
- To understand the nature of written discourse
- To understand that writing, and the teaching of writing, are socio-cognitive acts
- To understand why and how students struggle with writing
- To understand how to teach students to think strategically about writing
- To understand what writing strategies are and how to facilitate their use in the classroom
- To understand the nature of heroism

- To understand how to make connections between writing and the heroic act

## **Week Ten**

### **Introduction**

These are the givens:

What enters us will change us.

What we love will be taken.

—Kim Addonizio

This week we will read and discuss the second half of *Strategies for Struggling Writers*.

We will also view the YouTube Video, “Teaching English Language Learners in Middle School and High School” (click on the link in the module for Week Ten). After viewing the video, think about and discuss how any or all aspects of the video can cross-connect to what you are doing in your classroom, or to how you conceptualize teaching and learning.

### **Objectives**

- To understand the differences between knowledge telling and knowledge transforming (via writing)
- To understand how to teach writing as a method of integrating content, structure, and conventions
- To understand how to adapt writing strategies in different contexts
- To understand the roles of identity and resistance in the teaching of writing

## Week Eleven

### Introduction

“The facts with which I shall deal this evening are mainly old and familiar; nor is there anything new in the general use I shall make of them. If there shall be any novelty, it will be in the mode of presenting the facts, and the inferences and observations following that presentation.”

—Abraham Lincoln, “The Cooper Union Address, 1860”

“Logic was, formerly, the art of drawing inferences; it has now become the art of abstaining from inferences, since it has appeared that the inferences we feel naturally inclined to make are hardly ever valid.”

—Bertrand Russell

We will begin reading and using *Reading Between the Lines - Inferencing Skills*. I wrote this book because I have discovered, as an English educator and an English Education professor, that many teachers and students did not have a clear understanding of what an inference is, how many kinds of inferences there are, and, most importantly, how to teach students to make useful and accurate (or, as accurate as possible, given the situation and context in which the inference is to be made) inferences. Moreover, as I am sure you all know, the one kind of question that students have a hard time answering, whether it is a literature discussion question or a question on a standardized test, is the question that requires an inference.

As you work through the book, please take time to think about, reflect upon, and draw conclusions about how you can use the activities in the book — or ones like them — to help your students develop stronger inferencing skills.

### Objectives

- To understand what an inference is
- To understand the four kinds of inferences that we can make
- To understand the process of teaching inferences
- To understand how to use a variety of strategies to teach students to make inferences

## Week Twelve

### Introduction

We will continue reading and using *Reading Between the Lines - Inferencing Skills*

*No blog entry or responses are due this week, but the summary/response is due on Sunday, as usual: Write a **4 page essay response** to your engagements with *Reading Between the Lines — Inferencing Skills*.*

- What did you learn about inferencing?
- What did you learn about yourself as a learner?

### Objectives

- To understand what an inference is
- To understand the four kinds of inferences that we can make
- To understand the process of teaching inferences
- To understand how to use a variety of strategies to teach students to make inferences
- To reflect upon, and make inferences about, the nature of making inferences

## Week Thirteen

### Introduction

This week we will read and discuss Part I of *Teaching English by Design*.

*“Teaching English by Design is two books in one: a primer for teaching secondary English and a comprehensive guide to creating and using four – six week instructional units.”* In the book, Smagorinsky shares ideas and insights about students: “how they learn, and what kinds of classroom support their achievement in reading and writing.”  
*—from the back cover*

There will be no TED Radio Hour this week.

**You should have begun working on the annotated bibliography.**

In your Blog, due on Wednesday, discuss how the Smagorinsky text relates to the other readings in this course and to what you have learned thus far.

### **Objectives**

- To understand how students know what they know
- To understand how to provide scaffolds for student learning
- To understand how to use alternatives to teacher-led discussions
- To understand how to plan an entire course

### **Week Fourteen**

#### **Introduction**

This week we will read and discuss Parts II and III of *Teaching English by Design*.

No Blog entries this week.

You should have begun working on the **annotated bibliography**.

### **Objectives**

- To understand how to construct goals for conventional writing assignments
- To understand how to construct goals for unconventional writing assignments
- To understand how to respond to student writing
- To understand what a conceptual unit is
- To understand the basics of unit design
- To understand how to create unit rationale
- To understand how to plan for daily instruction

### **Week Fifteen**

#### **Introduction**

This week we will focus on the annotated bibliography.

Blog: discuss what you have learned in this course (**NB: 400 words**).

**Objectives**

- To understand how to choose a topic for the annotated bibliography
- To understand how to construct an annotated bibliography
- To understand how to apply the assessment criteria to the annotated bibliography for revision's sake

**Week Sixteen**

The annotated bibliography is due.