English 3351: The Dynamics of Language

Instructor: Dr. Polette

Term: Spring 2023

Meeting: T/R, 9:00-10:20 a.m., Hudspeth Hall, room #200

Credits: 3 hours of undergraduate credit

Office Hours: T/R 7:30–9:00 a.m., 12:00-12:30 p.m., Hudspeth Hall # 200 (and by appt.)

Office Phone: 915-747-5123

E-Mail: kpolette@utep.edu

Required Texts

• Teaching Vocabulary to Improve Reading Comprehension by William E. Naby (NCTE)
• No More “Look Up the List” Vocabulary Instruction by Charlene Cobb & Camille Blachowicz (Heinemann)
• Vocabulary Cartoons: SAT Word Power by Sam Burchers (New Monic Books)
• How to Read a Poem by Tania Runyan (T. S. Poetry Press)

A Quotation to Consider

“You don’t have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them.” —Ray Bradbury

Purpose

This course is designed to help you become an independent and critical thinker, writer, & learner; gain a working knowledge of the various manners and modes of language use and literacy development; and discover ways to develop language-based educational activities in the secondary language arts classroom:

• To understand the relationships between vocabulary knowledge, word play, oral expression, and reading comprehension.
• To learn effective strategies for teaching vocabulary to students, ones that provide scaffolds for learning (zone of proximal development).
• To help students develop word consciousness and to use words in multiple contexts.
• To lean to use strategies that foster a sense of cooperative learning.
• To help students discover the value of having and making choices and the value of taking manageable risks.
• To learn to read poetry, to connect poetry to vocabulary development, and to use nontraditional methods of interpretation.

Reading

The more active you are as a reader, the more you will derive from the reading experience (often in surprising ways) — e.g., the expansion of cognitive abilities, the widening of schema, the retention

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of content, the experience of the pleasure of the text (as Roland Barthes says), the development of agency, the amplification of imaginative capacity, and the dilation of long-term memory. With these ideas in mind, and as you the read the texts for this class, I would like you to think about the genre, the reader expectations, and the text connections for each text we read.

**Procedures**

Classes will generally consist of interactive literacy activities that are designed to demonstrate methods of effective pedagogy, ones that can be replicated and differentiated for use in the secondary English/Language Arts classroom. Since an essential part of learning is dependent on metacognitive reflection, time towards the end of each class will be provided so that you can reflect upon each class: what transpired, what you discovered, and how it opened your schema. Each subsequent class will begin with a sharing of your discoveries. To this end, please make careful and robust reflections.

- **Turn off and put away** cell phones and other electronic devices.
- If you have children and need a place for their care, avail yourself of the UTEP childcare center; please do not bring your children to class.
- Attend to personal needs before or after class, not during class. Do not bring food to class; water is permissible.
- Arriving late or leaving class early will constitute 1/2 an absence (unless there is a valid reason).
- Missing 7 classes = an F for the course.
- Because many discussions will take place during our class meetings, be sure to listen (and refrain from talking) when other people are discussing class-related issues.
- Do not work on assignments or activities for other classes during class.

**Grading:**

I will be using a variation of “Contract Grading” in this course. The idea here is to place the emphasis on your conscious and deliberate efforts as a reader and a writer rather than on an individual “assessment” of your writing. Which is to say, that I follow C. G. Jung in the notion that individuals make the greatest gains when they carefully and consciously follow the energies of the psyche to achieve ends that are personally meaningful and important. As such, I will not be employing methods of traditional writing assessment, so that you can assume a greater degree of responsibility for your own learning, so that you can take some risks (Jung reminds us that we make the greatest gains through our “inferior function”), and so that you can open and expand your schema as Howard Gardner says. To develop fluency in any area of endeavor (or “expertise” as Malcolm Gladwell writes in *The Tipping Point*) requires practice, failure, experimentation, and a metacognitive level of reflection.

As such, this is not the kind of class that supports the notion that the least amount of effort results in the highest possible grade. Instead, this is the kind of class where you will find that your full, dedicated
efforts will merit the grade of A, B, or C (as you choose) and with the articulated support of myself and your class colleagues — and not with the perception of the quality of your work, because quality, for all of us, necessarily fluctuates (both for the writer and the reader).

Requirements for the Grade of an A, B, or C (which, to some degree, are negotiable):

NB: For an assignment to receive credit, it must meet all the requirements provided by the directions, and it must model the example that is supplied. Also, failure to complete and upload assignments (apart from the required number of reflections) will merit a semester grade of B, C, or lower, depending on how many assignments have not been uploaded to BlackBoard by the due date and time.

♦ To receive the grade of A for this course, the following are necessary:
  • Miss no more than 2 classes (arriving late or leaving class early constitutes half an absence).
  • Complete 2 written Reflected Responses on time.
  • Complete the No More “Look Up the List” reflection.
  • Engage in all in-class activities.
  • Complete all minor writing activities: *those presented in class and those in the syllabus*.
  • Complete the Final Reflection Activity

♦ To receive the grade of B for the course, the following are necessary:
  ♦ Miss no more than 4 classes (arriving late or leaving class early constitutes half an absence).
  ♦ Complete 1 written Reflected Response on time.
  ♦ Complete the No More “Look Up the List” reflection.
  ♦ Engage in all in-class activities.
  ♦ Complete all minor writing activities: *those presented in class and those in the syllabus*.
  ♦ Complete the Final Reflection Activity

♦ To receive the grade of C for the course, the following are necessary:
  ♦ Miss no more than 6 classes (arriving late or leaving class early constitutes half an absence).
  ♦ NB: 7 absences = a grade of F for the course.
  ♦ Complete the No More “Look Up the List” reflection.
  ♦ Engage in all in-class activities.
  ♦ Complete all minor writing activities: *those presented in class and those in the syllabus*.
  ♦ Complete the Final Reflection Activity

*Note*: Missing 5 or 6 classes precludes the possibility of earning an A or B. Replacement assignments are an option, if there is a solid reason (e.g., not because an assignment was not completed).

A Note on Grading
Even though your writing will not receive a traditional grade, it will be read and considered, and it
will be given feedback. Which is to say that all assignments will be assessed in terms of Pass or Fail: if an assignment meets all the criteria set forth in the directions, adheres to the model that is provided, and has been uploaded to BlackBoard on time, it will Pass. If it does not meet the criterial set forth in the direction, does not adhere to the model that is provided, and/or has not been uploaded to BlackBoard by the due date & time, it will Fail. As such, for the sake of having a number to use on BlackBoard, assignments that Pass will receive a score of 5; assignments that meet most, but not all, of the criteria in the directions and match the example will receive a score of 3 (and will earn a grade of B or C depending upon how much of the criteria the assignment meets); assignments that fail will receive a score of 0. To receive an A for the class, all assignments must receive a score of 5.

A Note on Attendance
Because most of what you will learn in this course will result from your active involvement in each activity in each class meeting, it would be in your interest, educationally, to choose to attend every class. Since part of your grade, as outlined in the section on “contract grading” will be based on your attendance, please make the choice to come to every class. If, though, you opt not to attend every class, that is your choice, and it will be respected as a part of the grade you have chosen to receive.

Special Circumstances
If you experience a significant problem during the semester, one that will affect your attendance and/or your ability to complete and upload assignments, please let me know ASAP, and well before the end of the semester, so that you and I can take steps to address the problem, especially if the problem will have a potentially adverse effect on your grade. For these kinds of situations, an official verification (e.g., doctor’s note) will be required.

Communication
• I will communicate with you in person and via UTEP e-mail & BlackBoard Announcements. I will respond to e-mails M-F within 24 hours, if not sooner.
• I recommend that you download and install Outlook Express on your phone and/or computer.
• If you need to speak to me, we can meet during my office hours or by appointment in person or via Zoom.

Technology Requirements
• Some of the course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Be sure that your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best
browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

- Download or update the following software: Zoom, Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader, QuickTime, and Java. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.
- If you do not have a word-processing software, you can download Microsoft Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP’s Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about Microsoft Office 365 and follow the instructions.

NB: If you encounter technical difficulties, please contact the UTEP Help Desk, as the personnel there are trained specifically in handling the technological needs of students.

Assignments & Due Dates
- Assignments (with directions) are posted on BlackBoard.
- You may work on the assignments and upload them any time before they are due.
- Upload all completed assignments to BlackBoard by the due dates & times.

Late Work
Since the class assignments are posted on BlackBoard, and since there is ample time to work on all of them before they are due, and since this class focuses on your efforts to learn, late assignments will not be accepted.

Manuscript Form
All assignments must be uploaded in a Microsoft Word Docx and must have:
- 12 point font, only Times New Roman or Georgia or Century Schoolbook (font)
- black ink
- doubles-spacing & 1-inch margins
- page numbers at the bottom
- provide total word count at the end of the assignment

Assignments that do not adhere to the criteria for “Manuscript Form” will not receive a score of 5.

NB: Before you post written work, take it to a qualified source for suggestions regarding revising and editing, such as the Tutorial/Writing Center in the UTEP Library: https://www.utep.edu/uwc/.

Disability Support
If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, visit the CASS
website at https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/. If you receive accommodations from CASS, contact me and let me know the nature of those accommodations.

COVID-19
If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, please stay home (for face-to-face classes). If you are diagnosed with Covid-19, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work out appropriate accommodations, if necessary. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID-19 testing: Union East, 915-747-5624, studenthealth@utep.edu

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best ways that UTEP Miners can take care of Miners are to wear a mask indoors and to get the vaccine. If you need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org.

Personal Support
If you find that you are in need of personal support during the semester, contact UTEP Counseling & Psychological Services: 202 Union West, 915-747-5302 or https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/consel/ or call the 24 hour Emergency Crisis Hotline at 915-779-1800.

Plagiarism
If you obtain work from someone else and submit it as your own; if you use any material from another source in your work and do not give direct credit to your source; or if someone with whom you are working creates/writes any part of the work for you, you are plagiarizing. Acts of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are absolutely disallowed and will be dealt with swiftly according to UTEP’s established policy (which may result in receiving an F for the class).

Writing Skills
While all languages are incredibly valuable, each one possessing its own essential beauty, power, and grandeur, this is a graduate-level English class; as such, you should possess those writing skills that are necessary for you to express your thoughts in clear and effective language in English (academic prose), which is to say, you:

• should be able to develop your original and insightful thoughts in a written form that is clear and cohesive;
• should have a strong and clear “voice”;

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• should be able to support general assertions with facts, examples, illustrations, and explanations;
• should be able to create a sense of logical coherence in your writing;
• should be able to construct clear and effective sentences;
• should be able to use language that is precise, specific, and concrete;
• should be able to connect your paragraphs and sentences by using transitional devices;
• and should be able to use standard punctuation, mechanical constructions, and spelling.

Academic Writing Considerations
• Assignments that are hastily written and/or that are written at the last minute are generally ineffective because they do not communicate what the writer generally intends or desires.
• Writing rendered in one draft is never as effective as it could be.
• Writing that is “stream of consciousness,” that is, writing that “just comes out of the writer’s head” without thought about structure, coherence, or organization is generally ineffective because it is not configured to communicate what the writer intended—or what the writer had not yet realized.
• Writing that is clearly organized and coherent is effective because it provides the reader with a text that communicates clearly.
• Because effective academic writing is generally very different from the way we normally talk, it requires time, thought, effort (a deliberate attempt to reorganize and order random thoughts), and focused revision(s).

Support for Writing
1. If you do not possess the requisite writing skills to be able to construct effective academic prose, or if you are not sure how to construct academic prose, I strongly advise you to secure assistance from a qualified source and to put together an immediate, proactive plan that will help you become a more effective writer.
2. I will be glad to help you by appointment. I will also be glad to talk with you about an assignment before it is due. If you wish to talk with me about an assignment before it is due, arrange to meet with me in person or via Zoom; bring a draft of your assignment and have specific questions about your draft, that is, have questions that will let me know what concerns you have about your work and what, specifically, you wish to discuss.
3. You can receive help online from the Tutorial/Writing Center in the UTEP Library: https://www.utep.edu/uwc/

Questions & Concerns
• If you have any questions or concerns about anything in the syllabus or anything in the course at any time, please share them with me in person or via e-mail asap.
• If you do not share questions or concerns, then I have no way of knowing what is on your mind or how to be of assistance to you.
Netiquette
When e-mailing me, please begin with an appropriate greeting (e.g., Dear Dr. Polette, or Hello Dr. Polette, or Good Morning Dr. Polette, etc.), and also provide your name and what class you are in (e.g., This is _____ _____, and I am in your class, Engl _________), since I teach more than one class.

Course Drop Policy
According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, “When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of “W” before the course drop deadline and with a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.” If you find that you are unable to complete this course successfully, then contact the Registrar’s Office to initiate the drop process.

How to Succeed in This Class
1. Come to every class and actively participate in all class activities. Arrive on time and do not leave early.
2. Have the required books by the second day of class.
3. Bring the book(s) that is to be discussed to class.
4. Be proactive in class: ask questions, volunteer ideas, answer questions.
5. Do not miss more than 6 classes (for a grade of C or better).
6. Complete all the readings and be prepared to discuss them.
7. Complete all written assignments on time (see BlackBoard).
8. Follow the directions and examples for each written assignment.
9. Carefully monitor your absences, your late arrivals, and early departures.
10. Turn off and put away your cell phone.
11. Seek regular assistance from the UTEP Writing Center and/or me before assignments are due.
12. Contact me throughout the semester if you any questions, comments, or concerns.

Agreement
If you elect to remain in this class, then you are agreeing to adhere to the polices stated in this document.
Syllabus

NB: This syllabus is subject to change at my discretion to meet instructional needs and/or to accommodate time constraints; changes may include re-organizing due dates and the inclusion of additional assignments.

January

17 Introduction
19 Language & Literacy
24 Language & Literacy
26 **Read:** “Speak the Speech: Teaching Children to Read Expressively” pp. 22-34 in *The Oklahoma Reader* (PFD on BlackBoard)

* **Write:** a *reflective response*. See BlackBoard.

31 Language & Literacy

February

2 Language & Literacy
7 **Read:** *No More “Look Up the List”*

* **Write:** a *cited and reflected response*. See BlackBoard.

9 Language & Literacy
14 Language & Literacy
16 **Write:** *Vocabulary Words in Action activity*. See BlackBoard.

21 Language & Literacy
23 Language & Literacy
28 Language & Literacy
March

2  Language & Literacy
   * Write: Vocabulary and Personal Experience. See BlackBoard.

7  Language & Literacy

9  Language & Literacy

14 Spring Break

16 Spring Break

21 Language & Literacy

23 Language & Literacy

28 Language & Literacy
   * Write: a reflective response to what you’ve learned in ENGL 3351. See BlackBoard.

30 Language & Literacy

April

4  Poetry
   * Read: How to Read a Poem by Tania Runyan
   * Write: a 500-word reflection. See BlackBoard.

6  Poetry

11 Poetry

13 Poetry

18 Poetry
   * Write: Poetry and Vocabulary. See BlackBoard.

20 Poetry
May

2   * Write: a reflective response to what you have learned in ENGL 3351. See BlackBoard.

4   * Write: Final Reflection. See BlackBoard.