

Teaching Writing: Seminar in English Teaching — English 725 Teaching Writing — English 810S

Course Info:

English 725.01 (CRN 10503)

English 810S.01 (CRN 15418)

Room: Hamilton Smith 107 (class) /336 (lab)

Meeting Time: MW 3.40-5.00pm

Lab Meeting Time: M 5.10-8.00pm (only 9/11, 10/16, and 12/4)

Professor: Alecia Marie Magnifico

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Office: Hamilton Smith 323

Phone: 603.862.5274

Office Hours: [Weds 10-12](#), or by appt.

Online materials: Canvas, Google Docs

Writers learn they usually have to write badly to write well... The wrong words lead to the not-so-wrong words, and the almost right words may reveal the right words. ~ Don Murray

Welcome to English 725/810S!

Your secondary school English methods courses (725/810S and 726/892S) integrate the teaching of reading, writing/composing, speaking, listening, and viewing. This semester we will focus on writing/composition, although it is difficult, even undesirable, to attempt to fully separate these literacy skills and practices.

We'll learn about how English teachers meet the needs and interests of a richly varied population of students. We will review the varied English teaching standards used in NH schools, construct and critique teaching documents, and discuss and apply the work of master literacy teachers and theorists.

Working collaboratively, we will examine and compare philosophies of English teaching and learning, and we will develop your own approaches to literacy instruction. We will discuss theoretical, pedagogical, and practical ideas in large and small groups, engage in reading and composition exercises, produce and practice instructional activities and assessments, and evaluate teaching approaches. Successfully completing these two courses will help you recognize and affirm literacy skills and practices, and to consider how they can help your future students comprehend, describe, analyze, and evaluate various texts.

Recommended pre-requisites:

- It is not *required* that you complete Educ 500 before taking this course, but highly recommended. You will draw on your knowledge of classroom practices as you begin to design your own teaching.
- **If you are planning to complete the English Teaching major** and/or get certified to teach English Language Arts, please plan to take Engl 725/810s (fall) and 726/892S (spring) in the same year.

By the end of this academic year, I want you to feel like you can:

- Set goals for students, make effective learning plans, and assess/revise those plans as you teach.
- Design learning and teaching (for your future classrooms and individual students) based on theories of learning, composition, literacy, and cultural responsiveness.
- Find healthy ways to manage your teaching duties and relationships (budget time, seek mentors, share responsibility, conduct oneself professionally).
- Read, discuss, and adapt material from pedagogical and theoretical literature to strengthen your teaching and teaching plans.
- Identify, discuss, and support students' learning as they engage in a variety of literacy practices.

Here are our official course objectives. By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Identify the skills that students need to know how to do to complete a given task.
- Design activities, lessons, and units to meet established reading and writing standards/objectives.
- Design reading and writing activities to explicate, analyze, narrate, describe and evaluate.
- Develop teaching ideas, connecting them to pedagogical arguments and academic conventions.
- Identify teaching resources among mentors, professional literature, conferences, organizations (e.g.,

National Council of Teachers of English), technology, and websites.

- Evaluate professional literature (e.g. primary/secondary sources, teaching methods articles).
- Adapt materials for a variety of students' needs.
- Participate actively in class by listening, thinking, and responding thoughtfully to classmates.

These are our main course texts and materials — available at the UNH Bookstore, or online:

- **(required)** Kittle, Penny. *Write Beside Them: Risk, Voice, and Clarity in High School Writing*. Heinemann, 2008 → ISBN: 978-0325010977, [ebook link](#), [Bookshop.org](#), [AbeBooks used](#)
- **(required)** Anderson, Jeff. *Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage, and Style into Writer's Workshop*. 2004. → ISBN: 978-1571104120, [ebook link](#), [Bookshop.org](#), [AbeBooks used](#)
- **(required)** Minor, Cornelius. *We Got This: Equity, Access, and the Quest to Be Who Our Students Need Us to Be*. 2018. → ISBN: 978-0325098142, [ebook link](#), [Bookshop.org](#), [AbeBooks used](#)
- **(recommended)** Gallagher, Kelley & Penny Kittle. *180 Days*. Heinemann, 2018. → ISBN: 978-0325081137, [ebook link](#)
- **(recommended)** Burke, Jim. *English Teachers' Companion*. Heinemann, 2013 → ISBN: 0325028400, [ebook link](#)

For those of you developing a professional library, consider:

- Atwell, Nancie. *In the Middle: A Lifetime of Learning*. Heinemann, 2014.
- Brookhart, Susan M. *How to Create and Use Rubrics*. ASCD, 2013.
- Chavez, Felicia Rose. *The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop: How to Decolonize the Creative Classroom*. Haymarket, 2021.
- Coppola, Shawna. *Writing Redefined: Broadening Ideas about What it Means to Compose*. Stenhouse, 2019.
- Cunningham, Katie Egan. *Start With Joy: Designing Literacy Learning for Student Happiness*. 2019.
- Gallagher, Kelly. *Write Like This*. Stenhouse, 2011.
- German, Lorena Escoto. *Textured Teaching: A Framework for Culturally Sustaining Practices*. Heinemann, 2021.
- Murray, Don. *A Writer Teaches Writing*. Thompson Heinle, 2004.
- Rief, Linda. *Read. Write. Teach: Choice and Challenge in the Reading-Writing Workshop*. Heinemann, 2014.
- Muhammad, Ghodly. *Cultivating Genius*. Scholastic, 2020. **OR** *Unearthing Joy*. Scholastic, 2023.
- Smith, Michael W. & Jeffrey D. Wilhelm. *Getting It Right: Fresh Approaches to Teaching Grammar, Usage, and Correctness*. Scholastic, 2007.
- Spandel, Vicki. *The 9 Rights of Every Writer*. Heinemann, 2005.
- Tovani, Cris. *Why Do I Have to Read This?* Stenhouse, 2021.
- Weaver, Constance. *The Grammar Plan Book: A Guide to Smart Teaching*. Heinemann, 2007.
- Wilson, Maja. *Rethinking Rubrics in Writing Assessment*. Heinemann, 2006.

— Course Policies and Requirements —

1) **Participation and Credits.** Your active participation is critical to your own learning. You will need to come with an open mind and be prepared to give your best in a variety of teaching and learning activities. We will work to complete writing and reading exercises (as you will one day ask your own students to do), but we will also engage metacognitively — thinking about our writing, learning, and teaching processes so as to benefit future students.

Please note that this syllabus reflects the federal (and UNH) definition of a **credit hour** — a minimum of 3 hours of engaged time per week per credit over a 15-week semester. In other words, for **each** 4-credit course, expect to spend about 12 hours per week in class and working on assignments. Examples of engaged time include class time, assignments, assessments, labs, course-related experiences (e.g. talks or performances,

speakers, events, fieldwork, etc), conferences, and office hours. Follow these links if you're interested in how [colleges define credits](#) and [remain accredited themselves](#).

2) **Writing Intensive.** This is a writing-intensive course which partially fulfills the [university writing requirement](#). The threefold goal of writing-intensive courses is for students: 1) to use writing as a means for learning course material; 2) to learn various academic and disciplinary genres, and; 3) to gain competence with academic and other writing by focusing on the craft and process of writing.

3) **Professionalism.** Because we will be sharing and reflecting on our own teaching and learning experiences, you are expected to contribute to a supportive, caring, critically-engaged professional environment. Disagreement and criticism are key parts of learning, but please employ constructive, appropriate, non-harassing language and content at all times. (Here is a link to the UNH [Student Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities](#) handbook.)

4) **Public Health.** COVID-19 is still affecting our community, and you will need to be aware of any shifting guidelines. Depending on current conditions, testing or mask requirements may shift. Please check Canvas, your email, and the RAVE alert systems regularly to stay informed about current guidelines, which will also be posted at [Health and Wellness](#). You are always welcome to wear a mask in class, and I may wear one, too.

If you need an **individual accommodation** (e.g. you have a COVID diagnosis, a family emergency, etc), please contact your advisor and the Dean of Students (dean.students@unh.edu) to establish academic supports and request that a letter be sent to your faculty members. If you are sick, please take the time you need to rest and recover! If you are well enough to complete coursework, here are some options:

- Keep up with class activities and assignments asynchronously (e.g. readings, annotation, discussion boards, participate on collaborative class documents) using slides and document links on Canvas.
- If you provide enough notice (3-4 days), it may be possible for me to obtain an OWL camera.
- Request notes from a classmate.
- Schedule a conference with me through email or MyWildcatSuccess.

Class policies for COVID mitigation may be necessary, too. For instance, if our class/UNH experiences a flu or COVID-19 outbreak, we may move to Zoom. Please check email/Canvas alerts regularly to be ready for this.

5) **Attendance.** Learning to teach requires reading, reflecting, writing, and discussing. As such, seminar attendance in the form of participation in face-to-face and online class activities is required. As above, there will be alternatives and accommodations available if you are sick or quarantined, but attendance is vital when it's possible. Information that extends and complicates the course readings will be discussed each week, and your participation is crucial to your own learning — and to your classmates' learning, too!

If you know ahead of time that you will be absent (e.g. illness or observation of a religious/cultural holiday), please contact me and we will discuss work for that day. If you are absent unexpectedly, please make sure to get notes and materials from the class materials and discussion boards, talk with a colleague, and/or sign up for a conference with me.

6) **Late work.** Generally, you will receive reduced credit for work submitted after the due date. Please see the Grading Contract & Course Work document for details. If you become worried that you may need to turn in late work, plan ahead and talk to me in advance. Please note that while we can negotiate alternate plans ahead of time, there is no room in the schedule for last-minute extensions on group project work.

7) **Email & technology.** You may find devices like phones helpful (i.e. to access readings and notes), or distracting (i.e. alerts pull your attention away) during classes. Consider whether turning off email and notifications during classes would benefit your learning! [This article cites research](#) that suggests eliminating notifications altogether reduces general stress, too.

I am happy to correspond with you via email, though not always able to answer immediately. I will make every effort to respond in a reasonable amount of time. Please allow me 24 hours to respond, particularly if you send your message outside of business hours (9.00am-5.00pm). If I email you, particularly if there is a problem with your work, please respond to me within 24 hours, as well.

8) **Accessibility Services.** UNH is committed to providing students equal access to all university programs and facilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you are a student with a documented disability or believe you may have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) at 201 Smith Hall, 603-862-2607, or SAS.office@unh.edu. If you have received accommodation letters, please schedule a meeting with me so that we can review those accommodations as soon as possible. Contact course professors quickly because faculty have an obligation to respond when they receive official notice from SAS, but are under no obligation to provide retroactive accommodations.

9) **Writing Center.** Take advantage of the [Connors Writing Center](#), located in Dimond Library! You can review their hours and materials online, walk to Dimond, or email at writing.center@unh.edu. They provide both face-to-face and online assistance and can help with all genres and assignments.

10) **Mental and Emotional Health.** Your academic success in this course is very important to me. If, during the semester, you find emotional or mental health issues are affecting that success, you may find it helpful to contact the University's [PACS Counseling Center](#) (in Smith Hall; 603-862-2090) which provides counseling appointments and other mental health services.

11) **Plagiarism & Academic Honesty.** You must complete and present your own original work to learn. Plagiarism or misrepresentation will result in 0 points for the assignment. In some cases (e.g. a final project), you may fail the course. UNH's [academic integrity policy](#) defines plagiarism and misrepresentation as such:

Plagiarism: Use or submission of intellectual property, ideas, evidence produced by another person, including computer generated text or work outsourced to third-parties, in whole or in part as one's own in any academic assessment without providing proper citation or attribution. In some cases, reusing one's own previous work without acknowledging or citing the original work can constitute self-plagiarism.

Misrepresentation: Providing fabricated information, inventing data or citations, or misrepresenting information or oneself in an academic activity or related to academic attendance or other academic requirements.

To avoid plagiarism, acknowledge all sources, using the conventions of an appropriate academic documentation style (APA or MLA, please). You may also consult writing handbooks, the UNH academic honesty policy in the [Student Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities](#) handbook, or the UNH [plagiarism tutorial](#).

12) **Harassment.** If you or someone you know experiences harassment or assault as a result of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, identity, disability, veteran status, or marital status, please speak up. You can find contact info for UNH's Title IX (civil rights) officer here at the [Civil Rights and Equity Office](#), along with an FAQ for [reporting options](#).

If you wish to speak to a confidential support service provider who does not have a reporting responsibility because their discussions are subject to legal privilege, scroll down to Option 4 to find a list of [privileged confidential service providers/resources](#), including SHARPP, our campus advocates for sexual assault victims. **Please note:** I (along with all professors), am a mandatory reporter under Title IX, so if you report incidences of sex-based discrimination, sexual harassment or sexual violence to me, I am obliged to report it to our UNH Title IX office. I will talk with you about this reporting first.

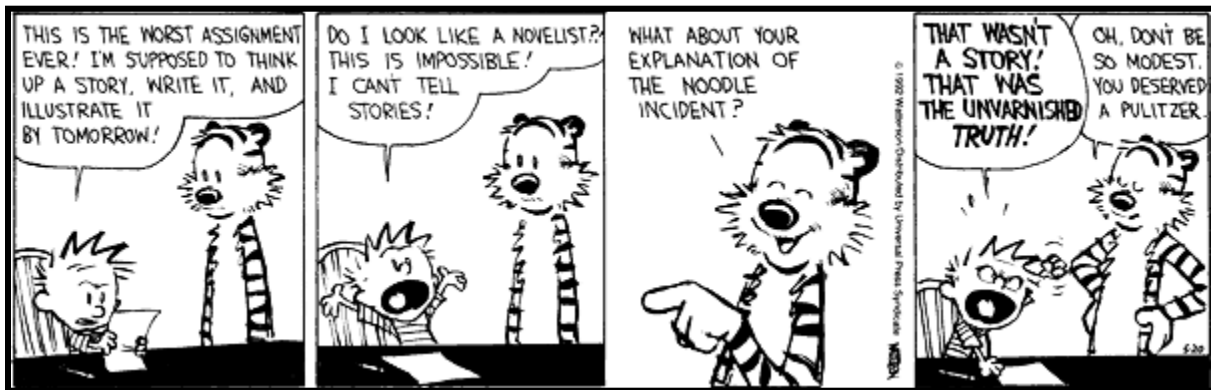
— Course Work Table —

Course Work if you are taking 725
General
Attendance & participation in class discussions, discussion boards, workshops, lectures, writings, etc.
Submit exercises (3 over the semester)
Design Project Components
Design Motivation & Goals
Design Studio
Final Design & Unit Plan Presentation
Final Reflective Paper

Course Work if you are taking 725L
General
Complete your practicum project (30 hour classroom mini-internship or research project)
Complete at least 6 project journals and engage with classmates' posts
Synthesize your learning from your project in a 10-min talk/presentation for the class

Course Work if you are taking 810S
General
Attendance & participation in class discussions, discussion boards, workshops, lectures, writings, etc.
Submit exercises (3 over the semester)
Design Project
Design Motivation & Goals
Design Studio
Final Design Poster & Unit Plan Presentation
Final Reflective Paper
Readings & Implications
Complete 2 Readings & Implications Papers
Synthesize these papers with your other course work in a 10-min talk/presentation for the class

— Course Work Details —



General Revision Policy

If you turn in incomplete work and receive feedback showing incomplete elements, you may revise. You must:

1. Tell me that you plan to revise.
2. Upload the new exercise or paper to Canvas within 2 weeks. Do not delete the original draft! Highlight the changes that you made or sections that you added.
3. Please send me an email letting me know that you have completed your revision and that the work is now complete so that I can provide full feedback.

Weekly Discussion Board Activities

Each week, we will be using the Canvas discussion boards to bring together course readings with your own thoughts and questions. Plan to write about 200-250 words in your initial post (or more if you wish). Your initial post may be a reply to someone else 😊

You may take one “skip week” (your choice — please choose a normal discussion, not project feedback) during the semester, or complete all boards to receive advanced credit towards an A!

Here are some ideas:

- Bring together ideas from the course readings with your thoughts, questions, or experiences (e.g. from your own schooling or your 725L internship). Questions that you don’t know the answers to can be particularly fruitful!
- Cite a key quotation (or a provocative one) from one of the readings and critically read/reflect on it.
- Start a conversation! You are encouraged to ask classmates questions, bring in a new point or story, respectfully debate, play devil’s advocate.
- Try making a visual, vlog, or podcast response! (Podcasting on Canvas has a 5-min limit.) Sometimes talking through an idea or playing with multimedia can be more fruitful than writing.
- If you are citing the course readings or providing links, references are not necessary. If you bring in a new source, please link or cite your reference!

Exercises

In this class, we’ll build knowledge of how to create individual classroom lessons/activities, along with broader design knowledge of how to design a unit of learning around goals, concepts, and questions.

Exercises will help you start to think about that first part: In each exercise, you will create a classroom lessons/activity to organize students' learning, visually and concretely. You will make a lesson/activity that will help you begin to practice designing learning (lesson planning). You may choose to adapt your exercises for or from your internship if you are a 725L mini-intern, or use them to try out an idea for your unit plan design project. Make your exercises as professional and full as you can so that you can use them again in your unit plan project, mini-internship, or future portfolio.

Meeting the expectations of the exercises as written here (including all sections of the assignment) will help you prepare for your internship and eventual teaching certification.

Unit Plan Design Project

The major project for the semester will be a unit design project. I do not recommend doing this project on your own, although you may if you would like!

We will form groups of 1-4, and together, you will design a curricular unit for use in your future classroom. While it is unlikely that you will be able to enact this design during this semester, you may be able to use some of your ideas in your mini-internship. To successfully participate in this project, you will need to complete the following milestones:

- **Design Motivation and Goals.** Your group will find or, using an AI tool like ChatGPT, generate an existing or “traditional” unit plan in the area where you would like to create new design. You will then annotate this unit plan to examine differences between traditional ways of teaching this topic/area and your learning goals, identify 3-4 sources that show existing conversation around teaching this topic/area, and articulate initial student learning goals for your unit.
- **Design Studio: Assessment.** You/your group will share your work so far, focusing on the overall approach you will take in your design, an assessment plan for your design, and how this assessment will reveal evidence of student learning. How will students show or express their learning? How will teachers know that students are meeting the learning goals? Your design should be grounded in theory, research, and readings (in class and your own research).
- **Final Design, Unit Overview, & Collection of Lessons:** A unit plan allows teachers to group learning goals and activities so that you can manage these goals and activities, organize them logically, and facilitate connection-making. It is usually formed around essential questions and learning goals and directed towards what students will learn from the unit. You/your group will present your final unit plan design, illustrating your unit, a written overview, and a collection of 5 lessons (one of which must take up grammar/mechanics) to exemplify the kinds of teaching that you would like to accomplish.
- **Self-evaluation and reflection paper:** In this *individual* paper, you will reflect on what you see as your own major successes and limitations in working on this project over the course of the semester. In this reflection, you will consider the hypothetical enactment of your final design and consider your own learning.

Graduate Project (if you are taking Honors or 810S): 2 Readings & Implications Papers

Research and read *peer-reviewed* articles and professional works (e.g. books, book chapters) on your topic, and write a paper of “readings and implications.” You should write about what the reading *argues* and the *implications* of this argument for your own teaching. Be sure to raise counter-arguments and to respond to them—for instance, consider what opponents or skeptics would say. You could also think about interviewing a teacher or consulting another kind of primary source — see me if you have an idea.

Please talk with me if you'd like to adjust your format or genre! You may write essays, newsletters with sidebars and headings, a photo essay with substantial text and captions, a multigenre piece, etc. Let your form follow your intention and interpretation, and see me if you have questions.

At the end of the semester, synthesize your papers with your other course work in presentation or multimedia format, talking overall about the research papers that you read this semester, what you learned, and the impact that you perceive this research will have on your future teaching. You could make a video or a podcast, craft a timeline (if you're studying a historical topic, perhaps), or highlight the implications of your papers in a web-text. Share your findings with the class in a ~15 minute presentation!

Topic Ideas: gender and/or culture in writing, student journaling, hiphop composition, student journalism, student literary magazines, strategies for helping ELLs write, writing/performing dramatic skits in the classroom, sketchnoting, social justice writing, teaching students of color, teaching LGBTQ students, multimedia composition, etc.

**** If you are a dual-credit student who is taking the 725L lab AND plans to complete a research project / case study, I strongly recommend aligning your case study topic with your Readings & Implications papers! These papers will help you establish your interests and consider your case study's participants and questions.**

Practicum Project (if you are taking 725L)

The seminar "lab," traditionally, has encouraged students to conduct one of two practicum projects: (1) A 30-hour mini-internship with a teacher mentor or (2) a small qualitative research study. The most common project has been a case study of a young adult reader/writer, but students have also completed interviews with teachers or small surveys and observation studies. I strongly suggest practicing your teaching and qualitative research skills by completing one of these practicum projects. Both of them will help you to hone important professional skills!

Practicum options are discussed in detail in the [Practicum Details](#) descriptions.

Practicum Teaching & Learning Journal (if you are taking 725L)

If you take the 725L seminar "lab," you will be developing new professional knowledge of what your life as a teacher will be like in your practicum (either the mini-internship or your research). I would like you to actively reflect on your experiences and new knowledge using Teaching & Learning Journals.