IL 2246: Syllabus

Course Description
This course provides a theoretical and practical foundation for students who wish to increase their effectiveness in the instruction of literature from diverse cultures. Through examining issues of critical literacy, reader-response, and multicultural education, attendees are able to articulate their rationale and approach to the effective incorporation of such texts, while also honing the practical skills that are likely to make them more effective.

Class activities will revolve around several academic texts and literary works designed to provoke thought and discussion about issues of teaching diverse literature in the secondary English classroom. Students will then incorporate new ideas and philosophies learned through reading and discussion into practical designs for teaching specific pieces of diverse literature. In participating in these activities students will also be asked to carefully examine their own philosophies and cultural beliefs as they relate to their pedagogical practices.

While this is a web-based course, it is vitally important for each student to complete readings on a weekly basis as initial discussion board postings are due on Wednesdays by midnight. Responses are due by Monday at midnight. Typically, a 15-week course meets for approximately 2 3/4 hours per week. You’ll need to spend this time on the website in addition to your weekly readings. Students will facilitate a weekly discussion in the discussion boards and part of your grade will be based on your participation in responding to and engaging in the entries posted by your peers. In other words, while this is a web-based class, you will still participate regularly and complete the course in 15 weeks.

Guiding Questions
These are our guiding questions for the course:

1. How can teachers successfully and critically engage students in multicultural literature? How can teachers incorporate new texts and rethink old texts? What pedagogical practices can teachers learn to more effectively teach these texts?
2. What can we learn from students’ responses to multicultural literature? What does it mean when students resist engagement with multicultural literature? In what ways do students’ cultural and social stances and assumptions affect their readings of multicultural literature?
3. How might differences and/or similarities between the cultures of teachers and of students come into play during the instruction of diverse types of literature? In what ways might classroom, school, and community contexts affect how teachers approach the teaching multicultural literature?

Required Text(s)
Many of the readings for this course will be posted on the course web site. However, you will need to purchase or borrow the following texts as soon as possible:

Course Expectations and Assignments

1. Completion of all readings and assignments meeting and/or exceeding graduate-level performance expectations (see schedule and descriptions below).
2. Completion of all discussion board postings and responses. These are not discrete entries. They are meant to build from one another as you make your way throughout the course. Further, these writings open the opportunity for dialogue and collaboration. It is expected that you'll respond to the thoughts of others regularly throughout the course. Your postings must indicate your thinking about the topics and demonstrate your having read and analyzed the texts.
3. Engaging in small and large group discussions and activities around the texts as specified in the course schedule.

The Major Assignments

1. Discussion Board Postings and Responses (30 Points)
Students are expected to fully participate in the discussion boards. Each week, students will read texts and respond to these texts via discussion board posting. This initial posting needs to be posted by midnight on Thursday; then, students are expected to respond to the postings of at least 5 peers by midnight on Sunday. In addition, students are expected to respond to the professor and the class facilitator(s). Make sure you check the discussion boards regularly so that you are answering questions, clarifying thoughts, and otherwise actively engaging. All postings and responses should reflect deep thinking and reflection of the texts and provide evidence of having read and thought about the texts. In addition to being well-written, students' postings and responses must be evidence- and text-based and reflective of graduate-level performance expectations.

2. Class Facilitation (10 Points)
Each student will be assigned a week to serve as class facilitator. As facilitators, students will send the professor 4-5 open-ended queries (questions that require depth of thinking, synthesis across readings, etc.) based on their readings for the week. Students will send these questions a week in advance so that the professor can post the questions to the discussion boards by Sunday night. The rest of the class will respond both to the questions and to each other. The facilitators are responsible for checking the discussion board postings throughout their facilitation week to encourage and challenge their peers’ responses, prompt them for clarification or elaboration, and to redirect discussion. (To model, I will facilitate the first few weeks.) At the end of the assigned week, students will submit a reflection to the professor entitled "Closing Thoughts." Students will summarize all the main points discussed in the week's discussion boards, and reflect on the successes and challenges they faced as facilitator.

3. Literacy Lesson Plans (2 x 10 points each = 20 points)
Each student will be responsible for creating TWO 50 minute “secondary classroom” lesson plans. These lessons could also be focused on an elementary or college-level classroom with professor approval. These lessons should utilize techniques and ideas found in the academic readings and should focus on instruction of one of the literary texts the class has read and discussed. Students will be provided with a lesson plan template. The lesson plan must have CCSS, lesson objectives, step-by-step procedures (such as pre-reading, during-reading, and after-reading activities), and a formative assessment. Your peers will provide feedback on the rough drafts of the lesson plans. You will have a week to revise your lesson plans and then submit a final lesson plan to the professor along with a reflection paragraph sharing how you revised your lesson plan based on the feedback.

4. Book Trailer (10 Points)
Using a digital video editor (or a webtool of your choice) and following copyright rules, you will create a digital book trailer designed to “hook” an adolescent reader. You will select a multicultural trade book geared toward young adults preferably one that was written in the past 5 years. Your book must be approved by the professor (see the list of recommended books and authors on our Courseweb site). For examples of book trailers completed by former students, please peruse this webpage: http://pittlit13.wordpress.com.
5. **Instructional Project** (30 Points)
As a culminating project, students will construct a project that bridges what they have learned in this course with their own pedagogical, research, and/or content area interests. The goal of this project is to think critically and deeply about the readings and discussions from this course and apply this thinking to your other scholarly interests. This project can take any number of forms and should be discussed with your professor at least two weeks prior to the date the project is due. Possible ideas include:

- Literacy Unit of study for a K-12 or college-level course including text complexity analyses (must be focused on multicultural texts) and consisting of at least 3 lessons.
- Research proposal focused on multicultural literature.
- Literature review (incorporating texts from this course with other relevant texts on related or interdisciplinary topics) focused on multicultural literature.
- In-service program for teachers in your content area focused on multicultural literature.
- Teacher Resource Guide which includes an annotated bibliography of a multicultural literature trade books with at least 20 texts and a list of at least 5 CCSS/CCR-aligned tasks.
- Field Project in which students interview at least 5 students about their reading interests and preferences and create a specific annotated bibliography of multicultural literature for each student.
- Any other ideas need to be approved by the professor.

Your time and effort on this project should be equal to the time and effort you would put into an 8-10 page academic paper. **This project is due by the date listed on the course schedule, and should be submitted via the “Submit Final Instructional Assignment” tool.**

### Grading Scale

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>99-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-98</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-87</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-77</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>below 70</td>
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### Course Policies

- All assignments must be completed to pass the course.
- Late assignments will receive a 10% deduction for every day (or part of a day) that they are late.
- All of the writing you do for this seminar should be wordprocessed in 12 point font (yielding approximately 250-300 words/page) with one inch margins. Proficiency with the conventions of Academic Written English must be demonstrated as part of the professional competence of all teachers.
- You are expected to adhere to the University of Pittsburgh’s policy regarding academic integrity. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course and possible further disciplinary action.
- If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 216 William Pitt Union, at 412-648-7890 or 412-383-7355 (TTY) as early as possible, but no later than the fourth week of the term. Click [Office of Disability Resources and Services](http://www.pitt.edu) for more information.
- If you are not doing satisfactory work you will be notified as soon as it becomes evident.
- This course requires students to use their pitt.edu email address. This is how we will communicate with you and it is expected that you will check email on a regular basis.
- Changes in this syllabus may be made to meet the academic objectives or in the case of unanticipated events. Any changes will be announced via email and the announcements section in Blackboard.
- Assignments will not be accepted late. (The Professor reserves the right to make case-by-case exceptions.) Missed discussion board postings cannot be made up and will result in a decrease in the final grade. It is important for students to keep up with the tasks.