

ENGLISH 341
ADVANCED COMPOSITION FOR EDUCATION MAJORS
SYLLABUS AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS
DR. NANCY MACK

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE:

The purpose of this course is to help you to improve your writing so that you will be a literate role model for your students. In order to be a good teacher of writing, you must feel that you are a real writer. In this course, you will gain firsthand experience with the most innovative strategies for teaching writing. We will engage in a wide range of writing tasks: memoir essays, creative writings, lesson plans, and reading journal entries. None of these writing tasks will be at all similar to the voiceless report writing that you have done in your other college courses. Since reading and writing are so closely related, we will share a plethora of wonderful poems, short stories, and books that can both inspire and inform writing. I hope that you will learn to enjoy writing again and discover that you have something to say that others need to read. By celebrating your own literacy, you can develop the motives necessary to lead students to become life-long readers and writers.

This class will take learning to write seriously. Writing will be treated as a complex process rather than a low-level, basic skill. This process includes prewriting, drafting, conferencing, revising, proofreading, publishing, self evaluating, and goal setting. Most college students feel that they do not have the luxury of the time that is necessary to use the writing process, so in this class we will take the time to experience the whole writing process for each major essay. Every class meeting, a large amount of time will be given to sharing your writing in a group of your peers. Your writing group will help you to understand the reader's perspective of your writing.

The writing process is an important part of an integrated language arts classroom as required by the Ohio State Department of Education standards and model curriculum. Skills like usage, spelling, and punctuation should not be isolated as meaningless drill activities but are best learned in a communication context where reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and thinking are all interrelated. Integrated language arts involves students in meaningful writing experiences that are published or shared with a real audience. Writing can be a useful tool for learning any content area. In other words, students can use writing to understand social studies, math, science, health, or literature. Writing can be a more active way of learning content than passive listening or reading. Likewise, this class will use writing as a means for you to learn about teaching. You will write journal entries in response to what we do and what you read. These entries will help you to consider what you are learning in this course and how you might apply this information to your own classroom in the future.

This class will consider both the theory and the practice of teaching writing. Developing a theory of composition is important to a language arts teacher because every teaching practice represents an implicit theory about language learning. For example, using writing for punishment demonstrates a very negative view of writing. It is important for you to develop reasons why you will do certain activities with your students and why you will not do others. After trying out several different classroom practices as a writer, you will analyze which ones were the most effective. In addition, the students in this course will develop a whole notebook full of exciting teaching ideas. This will be accomplished by having each student create a lesson plan that will be duplicated and distributed to all members of the class. We will consider cultural beliefs about literacy instruction and what it means to welcome your students to the literacy club.

Your learning experience this quarter will involve what may seem like an unbelievable amount of writing. **THIS IS A WRITING COURSE:** a piece of writing will be due almost every class meeting. You will need to arrange your life accordingly in order to keep up with this demanding pace. Prepare family and friends for your new schedule. Hopefully, you will not just leave this class with a handful of papers but with a knowledge of how to foster the joy of literacy for both you and your students.

2. TEXTS:

Seeking Diversity by Linda Rief.

If You're Trying to Teach Kids How to Write, You've Gotta Have This Book REVISED EDITION by Marjorie Frank.

A good dictionary, an indexed thesaurus, and a usage handbook. (I prefer The Scott, Foresman Handbook for Writers or A Pocket Style Manual by Diana Hacker.)

3. MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Two Essays You will write two formal essays for this course that are approximately two and a half pages in length. You will be given assignment sheets that will explain the topic for each essay. It is up to you to modify the topic so that you are writing about something meaningful to you. The goal is to write wonderful essays not to follow directions mindlessly. If you are having trouble understanding an assignment or coming up with an idea, be sure to see your instructor for help right away. Problems only get worse if you wait until the last minute. Please do not be afraid to come to my office. Each student deserves individual attention from the instructor. You are paying for my services

B. Literature-Based Lesson Plan Starting the third week of the quarter, you will begin working on a lesson plan that integrates reading and writing. A list of headings will be provided that will be used for each person's lesson plan. These headings cover both reading and writing as a process. Your rough draft will be evaluated and you may revise your lesson plan.

C. Process Portfolios Each of the three times that you hand in a major assignment for a grade, you should turn in the final copy and all of the papers that you used during your writing process. In this class you get credit for all of your hard work. All of your rough work will receive draft points that will be tallied up at the end of the quarter as part of your final course grade. Your folder's contents will be evaluated twice, once as a process and once as a product.

Please place all of your work for each essay in one folder to turn in to me. You may use a folder with pockets or a manilla file folder if you wish. Remove the previous essay and rough drafts from your folder before you turn in each new paper. Save each essay and all rough drafts. An assignment will be considered late if it is not handed into me at the beginning of the class period. Putting essays in my mailbox or under my office door involves the risk that they may become lost. You should make a copy of any paper that is not handed into the instructor during class time in case there is a problem. Papers are to be turned in on time. Your grade will be significantly lowered if your paper is turned in late.

D. Response and Reading Journal Entries Frequently, you will be assigned to do an informal Response Journal entry. These will be assigned in class and should be labeled and dated. You will receive journal points for doing these entries. Some entries will be responses to things that we do in class, others will be Self-Evaluation responses to your writing process. You are required to keep all of these entries in a notebook or folder since you will need them in order to write your final self evaluation essay at the end of the quarter. Reading Journal entries will be written on bookmarks provided by the teacher and will be turned in one at a time when assigned.

4. GRADES:

A. Percentages

PROCESS PORTFOLIOS

First Essay	30%
Second Essay	30%
A Literature-Based Lesson Plan	30%

PROCESS POINTS

Response and Reading Journal Entries	5%
Rough Draft Points and Self Evaluations	5%

B. **Writing Problems** You can receive help at the Writing Center. If you have not visited the Writing Center at Wright State University, you owe yourself a trip to the basement of the library because our writing center is one of the best ones in the nation. The **Writing Center** can give you free tutoring on any paper that you need to write while you are here at WSU. You can make an appointment, call the Writer's Hotline (775-2158), or E-mail the web site.

C. **Evaluation** For daily assignments, you will receive **points** that will become 25% of your grade. For major written assignments, you will receive a grade sheet listing the primary traits that you will be expected to demonstrate in your work. I will evaluate each skill and give you a page of written comments with a **letter grade**.

D. **Incompletes** Incompletes are rarely given for this class. If you feel that there are compelling circumstances to warrant an incomplete, contact the instructor **before** the end of the quarter to make arrangements.

E. **Plagiarism** Wright State has a clear plagiarism policy on the university web site that you should read. As a future teacher, you should realize that you should never, ever plagiarize, no matter how stressed you are. Ask for an extension before you put your whole career at risk. Copying anything from the internet is plagiarism.

5. BASIC POLICIES:

A. **Attendance** **Regular attendance is expected. Poor attendance will lower your final grade.** This is not a correspondence course. Participating in discussion groups is essential to your grade. Just doing the assignments and coming to class now and then is not enough. Missing one class will be equal to missing half a week's worth of work. If you have more than two absences, you should drop the class because you are at risk for failing the course. I refuse to judge one excuse as more valid than another. If you need to leave class early or if you need to come to class late frequently, you should drop the class and take it another quarter.

If you have to be absent, you should contact another student on the phone list before the next class period so that you can find out what you have missed. This way you can come to class with the work that was assigned while you were absent.

B. **Class Cancellation** Since Wright State rarely closes, we need a system for deciding when the weather is too bad for you to come to class. Rather than trying to call each one of you, I will follow the closing announcement for Sinclair University. So if the weather is bad, watch TV channels 2, 22, or 7 or listen to the radio for an announcement. I may be absent due to presentations at state and national conventions.

C. **Future Use of Your Work** I like to use real student papers as good examples in class. I also use student writing in workshops, conference presentations, and academic articles about teaching. I will make an effort to contact you if I publish your writing in a book or on the web. If you do not want your writing published or shared in a future class, please notify me in writing on your cover sheet. You will not be paid for your writing, but such a publication could be listed on your resume`. In addition, the work that you do this quarter will be utilized for your teacher portfolio that will be created in the ILA Capstone course. These materials will be important for job interviewing, Praxis III, and national licensure purposes.