

ENGL 4355 (CEL): Teaching Composition and Literature in Secondary Schools (CRN 10928)

Fall 2020

Class Schedule: T/TH 1:30-2:50 pm

Location: Hudspeth Hall (HUD) 200

Dr. Brad Jacobson

Office hours: TBD

HUD 318

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Accommodations for Disabilities: If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please 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, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass. Please inform me about specific accommodation needs at the start of the course.

Students without documented disabilities who may need specific accommodations should contact me to set up a conference to discuss specific needs.

Course Description

In this CEL* course, we will explore key concepts and practices in the teaching of reading and writing in secondary schools.

Our work is grounded in core principles of the National Writing Project (www.nwp.org), a research-based and teacher-centered network dedicated to the teaching of writing. These principles include:

- The best teachers of writing are writers themselves
- Teachers provide the best instruction for other teachers
- Anyone, no matter their ability level, can improve their writing in a supportive context with other practicing writing
- Teachers, students, and communities benefit when teachers form networks with other teachers and draw on collective experience

This course therefore immerses emerging teachers in the theory and practice of teaching writing by grounding the course in experience: be prepared to write extensively, invest deeply in the writing of El Paso high school students in our partner classroom, and use these experiences as a starting point for questioning, extending, and applying scholarship from leading thinkers on literacy and writing pedagogy.

*Community Engagement & Leadership (CEL) Designation

The “CEL” designation is part of a new certificate program in the College of Liberal Arts (full details to be provided in class). The purpose of this CEL course is to strengthen students’ understanding of their role in society as engaged citizens and to build the knowledge and competencies that will enable them to be socially responsible and participating community

leaders. Please also note that course assignments and assessments are developed in line with UTEP's "Edge Advantages" goals.

Throughout the syllabus I have identified specific CEL tasks and assignments, but you will find that CEL is integrated throughout the course. You should expect to contribute at least 20 hours to our school partnership through both online and face-to-face interactions. This engagement will be implemented through our class assignments and activities so it will not feel like 20 *extra* hours. If and when we are able to meet face-to-face with our school partners, there will be a digital option for any student unable to attend. Because this engagement will be integral to your case study, blog posts, class observation, and peer assessments, approximately 50% of your final grade will be CEL-related.

Learning Goals (and EDGE Advantages)

This class will challenge you to:

- Develop your own identity, practices, and passions as a writer, as the best teachers of writing are writers themselves (*EDGE Advantages: Confidence; Communication*)
- Gain familiarity with a range of pedagogical techniques to help learners develop as writers and meet a variety of communication needs (*EDGE: Critical Thinking; Problem Solving; Social Responsibility*)
- Expand your knowledge about teaching writing by discussing work from scholars and teachers on writing pedagogy (*EDGE: Confidence; Critical Thinking*)
- Synthesize current scholarship with your experience writing and working with high school students (*EDGE: Leadership; Critical Thinking; Problem Solving; Teamwork*)

You will have ample opportunity to discuss these TExES Pedagogy and Professional Responsibility (PPR) standards:

- Create a community of learners in an inclusive environment that views differences in learning and background as educational assets (*EDGE: Social Responsibility; Critical Thinking; Problem Solving*)
- Keep current with developments, new content, new approaches, and changing methods of instructional delivery within their discipline (*EDGE: Confidence; Critical Thinking*)
- Reflect on your own strengths and professional learning needs, using this information to develop action plans for improvement (*EDGE: Problem Solving; Critical Thinking*)

Course Texts

Required Texts

Gallagher, Kelly and Penny Kittle. *180 Days: Two Teachers and the Quest to Engage and Empower Adolescents*. Heinemann, 2018.

Harris, Joseph. *Rewriting: How to Do Things with Texts*, 2nd edition. Utah State, 2017.

Winn, Maisha T. and Latrise P. Johnson. *Writing Instruction in the Culturally Relevant Classroom*. NCTE, 2011.

Additional Required Materials

- UTEP email account and computing account
- An active [Microsoft OneDrive](#) account (using your UTEP login you can access from [MyUTEP](#))
- A blog on EduBlogs: <https://edublogs.org/>
- A PDF reader that allows annotation: free tools include [Preview \(Mac\)](#), [Adobe Reader](#), [Mendeley](#). OR \$10-20 for printing course readings

Professional Resources:

- National Council of Teachers of English: <http://www.ncte.org>
- National Writing Project: <http://www.nwp.org>.
- Modern Language Association: <http://www.mla.org>
- Rethinking Schools: <http://www.rethinkingschools.org>
- Links to teaching resources can be found on our course blog

Major Components of the Course

Working with Student Writers (CEL)

We will be partnering with a 10th grade English Language Arts course at [Young Women's STEAM Research & Preparatory Academy](#) in EPISD. This partnership is designed to offer you the chance to interact with a range of students and an award-winning teacher and UTEP alum. You will be working with the STEAM Academy students both online (via OneDrive) and face-to-face.

Exploring the Writing You Want to Teach

Given that the best teachers of writing are writers themselves, you will have opportunities to experiment with writing in a range of genres and modalities to help you explore which kinds of writing you are most energized to teach. You will meet regularly in writing groups to share and respond to colleagues' writing.

Reading and Discussion

Course readings cover pressing issues and diverse assignments in writing pedagogy, and they are designed to have clear applications to the 6-12th grade classroom. You will post weekly responses on our class blog addressing the readings, and you will be expected to respond to comment on these blogs on a regular basis.

Major Course Projects

Intertextual Teaching Statement: Teaching Statements, also called Teaching Philosophies, are a genre of writing that explains the pedagogic beliefs, values, and practices of the writer/teacher. This semester-long assignment will help us to achieve our goal of examining, discussing, and reflecting on our beliefs about teaching writing. More detailed information will be distributed in class.

Case Study (CEL): The purpose of this assignment is to apply scholarship we've read in this class to your work with one or two secondary students. This is your opportunity to synthesize

the scholarship we've learned (and demonstrate your rich understanding of this scholarship), apply that learning to one or two specific cases, and consider future implications for your teaching and ELA teaching, in general. More detailed information will be distributed in class.

Class Observation (CEL): For this task, you will spend 60-90 minutes in Ms. Guerrero's classroom at El Paso Young Women's STEAM Academy, which has a project-based learning (PBL) focus. This is an opportunity to see a classroom that puts many of the ideas and theories we will discuss into practice. More detailed information will be distributed in class.

Blog Posts (CEL): You will compose a weekly post to our class blog engaging with our class texts and your CEL experiences with our high school partners. As these blog posts are intentionally ideas in progress, please know that "correctness" is less important than your willingness to engage with the ideas in our readings.

Peer Assessments (CEL): You will offer extensive, readerly feedback to your writing group members for each of our major writing tasks, and you will offer extensive feedback to at least two STEAM Academy students.

Short Assignments: There will be other, short assignments required of you throughout the semester, many of which will be posted to your blog.