

## English 4000/SED 4100: Approaches to Teaching Literature and Composition

Oakland University  
Department of English  
R 5:30 – 8:50 (CR 14263)  
SFH 371

Professor Amanda Stearns-Pfeiffer  
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### Course Description

ENG 4000/SED 4100 (formerly ENG 398) is a teaching methods course for English majors (ENG 4000) and minors (SED 4100) who plan to teach in the secondary schools. This course also serves certified teachers seeking to complete an endorsement in English (SED 4100). In this course, we will examine a variety of strategies for helping students become better readers, writers, and critical thinkers. In addition, we will review theories of English Language Arts instruction, discovering ways to make and implement curricular decisions about teaching literature, language, and writing.

STEP at Oakland University is selective, limited to a small number of students who have outstanding academic records and who show strong potential for success as secondary teachers. This course is intended as a prerequisite and a companion course to SED 4200 (Teaching in the Major Field, taken Fall of the internship year). These two courses form the cornerstone in our teacher preparation by providing an extensive study of important concepts and blending pedagogical theory and practice. Designed to provide preparation for the teaching internship, English 4000/SED 4100 encourages students to become involved with the English Language Arts curriculum and to become familiar with effective methodology.

Through direct instruction and modeling, this course promotes an awareness of the attitudes and skills needed by English Language Arts teachers. Students are encouraged to become familiar with the curriculum and with professional issues, and to engage in self-reflection. Methods of instruction include lecture, class discussion, instructional videos, micro-teaching experiences, and peer reviews.

### Course Texts:

1. Smagorinsky, Peter. *Teaching English by Design*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2008.
2. Green, John. *Turtles all the Way Down*. Dutton Books, 2017.
3. Thomas, Angie. *The Hate You Give*. Balzer & Bray, 2017.
4. This course requires a **VIA LiveText** subscription. VIA LiveText allows you to create and submit course assessments online and allows for long-term storage of projects, documents, and your teaching portfolio. Only one VIA LiveText subscription is needed for the length of your program. Therefore, if you already have purchased VIA LiveText for another course, you need not purchase an additional subscription for this course. If the purchase of VIA LiveText is a hardship for you, please see your instructor. You can find more information at <https://www.oakland.edu/sehs/student-resources/livetext/> and can purchase your two/five year LiveText Student Membership.

5. **ONE** of the following books (do not purchase until Project II groups are formed):
  - a. Anderson, Jeff. *Mechanically Inclined*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 2005.
  - b. Gallagher, Kelly. *Write Like This*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 2011.
  - c. Appleman, Deborah. *Critical Encounters in High School English*.
  - d. Atwell, Nancy. *In the Middle*.

6. **ONE** of the following books (do not purchase until Project II groups are formed):
  - a. *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger
  - b. *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
  - c. *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers
  - d. Or another YA book (first approved by me!)

\* NCTE Student Membership is encouraged.

## Projects and Class Requirements

### I. Project I: Literacy Narrative (15%) 2 weeks

What shapes our beliefs and values when it comes to teaching? Former teachers, reading or writing experiences, inspiring assignments, motivating books: these are all potential catalysts for building a foundation of pedagogical principles. Who we are as readers, writers and learners can shape our future as teachers; this project is meant to investigate how our past experiences can influence our future careers. We will tackle the topic of BEST PRACTICES within the framework of this project. What does best practice mean, and what do best practice teaching methods *look* like?

### II. Project II: Group Reading/Pedagogical Project (20%) 4-5 weeks

How do we make curricular decisions within our classrooms? More specifically, how do we decide *how* to teach literature and writing? For this project, we will form groups of 4 people; group members will choose one book from above section #4 and the group will choose one book from #5. The pedagogically founded book chosen from #4 will be used as a catalyst for how you would teach the novel from #5 to middle or high school students. This project is meant to investigate how the best practice ideas we read about can be implemented in our teaching in order to meet CCSS. Groups will share their teaching strategies during a group teaching-presentation. The pedagogical books from section #4 can also serve as the basis for your individual micro-teaching presentations (see below).

\*HLTPs: **14. Designing single lessons and sequences of lessons**

### III. Project III: Micro-teaching Experiences/Classroom Discussion Simulation (30%)

Twice this semester, you will lead class lessons. First, you will present a mini-lesson based on the lesson plans you will create for Project IV, and next you will lead the class in a discussion about a YA novel. Facilitating a classroom discussion is a complex, challenging task for teachers of all experience levels. Successful classroom discussion includes as many participants as possible, elicits students' individual thinking, is not teacher dominated, begins with a launch, and the process is adjustable when it is not working. There are definite steps that teachers can take to help ensure successful, engaging discussion in their classrooms. Each of you will have the opportunity to practice successful discussion tactics as the class reads two popular young adult novels (by John Green and Laurie Halse Anderson).

\*HLTPs: **1. Leading a group discussion, 3. Eliciting and interpreting individual students' thinking, and 14. Designing single lessons and sequences of lessons**

### IV. From Theory to Practice (25%) 3-4 weeks

Your final project for this course will be to create a unit plan (complete with daily lesson plans) for a reading/writing project to be used in a middle or high school classroom, using the principles of "Best Practice" in teaching reading and writing. We will move from what we *think* about designing and implementing lesson ideas and unit plans, to actually crafting a thematic unit.

\*HLTPs: \*HLTPs: **14. Designing single lessons and sequences of lessons and 15. Checking student understanding during and at the conclusion of lessons**

### V. Participation: (10%)

To do well in this class, you will need to be present, and you will need to be part of our classroom community. For grading purposes, "class participation" includes willingness both to engage in discussions, be part of class activities, and share your work occasionally (other than when it is required). Journals and in-class writing will be included under this heading.

**Grading:** The basic undergraduate grading system at Oakland University is a 32-point system of numerical grades, with passing grades ranging from 1.0 through 4.0, by tenths, and a no credit grade of 0.0.

3.6-4.0 A                      3.0-3.5 B                      2.0-2.9 C                      1.0-1.9 D                      0.0 no credit

**Attendance and Late Work:** As active participants in the teaching of writing and revision, you are expected to act as professionals and **attend all class meetings**. You will spend much class time in response groups or work teams with peers, and the absence of one group member can make progress on projects difficult. **Excessive tardiness may result in an absence.** If you have extenuating circumstances/illness that needs authorization, please see the Dean of Student's office.

This is a demanding course for individuals planning on being teachers. This class is committed to helping you prepare to teach, but it also requires a commitment from you to be in class and be prepared to make a contribution to our classroom work. If an absence occurs, or you know that it is going to occur, I expect that you act professional and responsible – informing me (and, if appropriate) your classmates, of an impending absence. *If you miss more than **two** unexcused classes during the semester, I reserve the right to lower your final grade by one letter. More than **four** unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.*

Projects are due at the **beginning** of class, unless otherwise noted. Late work is very discouraged, and will require communication with me in order to be accepted; your grade will be penalized for each day it is late. Assignments turned in via email are occasionally accepted.

### Technology

You are required to have **computer access** for work & correspondence for this class. Many of the projects in this course will utilize basic technologies: online collaboration, presentation preparation, and word-processing.

### Academic Honesty Policy:

All members of the academic community at Oakland University are expected to practice and uphold standards of academic integrity and honesty. Academic integrity means representing oneself and one's work honestly. Misrepresentation is cheating since it means students are claiming credit for ideas or work not actually theirs and are thereby seeking a grade that is not actually earned. See Oakland University's plagiarism policy: <https://www.oakland.edu/?id=28413&sid=522>

### Classroom Civility and Other:

- Each student has the right to his or her opinion on any subject and this classroom will be a safe place to explore these opinions. Rudeness will NOT be tolerated in any form.
- Turn cell phones **off** during class. Text messaging during class is inappropriate. **EXCESSIVE TEXTING DURING CLASS WILL RESULT IN AN ABSENCE FOR THE DAY.** You must be here both physically and cerebrally.
- Use of laptops during class is by permission only.
- Be on time every day and be prepared for class. Excessive tardiness may result in an absence.
- All email communication with students **must** take place through [oakland.edu](mailto:ou@oakland.edu) email accounts.

### Students with Disabilities:

Students who may need to do so are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) at OU. The mission of this office is to ensure that all students with disabilities participate fully in university life, to coordinate services and programs so students with disabilities can maximize their educational potential and to increase the level of awareness among all members of the university community. DSS is located in 121 North Foundation Hall; phone:(248) 370-3266.

## High Leverage Practices:

- 1. Leading a group discussion**
2. Explaining and modeling content, practices, and strategies
- 3. Eliciting and interpreting individual students' thinking**
4. Diagnosing particular common patterns of student thinking and development in a subject- matter domain
5. Implementing norms and routines for classroom discourse and work
6. Coordinating and adjusting instruction during a lesson
7. Specifying and reinforcing productive student behavior
8. Implementing organizational routines
9. Setting up and managing small group work
10. Building respectful relationships with students
11. Talking about a student with parents or other caregivers
12. Learning about students' cultural, religious, family, intellectual, and personal experiences and resources for use in instruction
13. Setting long- and short-term learning goals for students
- 14. Designing single lessons and sequences of lessons**
15. Checking student understanding during and at the conclusion of lessons
16. Selecting and designing formal assessments of student learning
17. Interpreting the results of student work, including routine assignments, quizzes, tests, projects, and standardized assessments
18. Providing oral and written feedback to students
19. Analyzing instruction for the purpose of improving it

(See more at: [www.teachingworks.org](http://www.teachingworks.org))

"We shouldn't teach great books; we should teach a love of reading."  
-B.F. Skinner

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