Pre-requisite: None

**Instructor**
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**Course Description**
An investigation of literary and content print and nonprint media. Considers questions related to materials, language sources, instructional systems and organizational arrangements appropriate for use in today's classrooms. Special attention is given to the preparation of teacher, parent and librarian guides to literature; adaptation of materials for children and youth; and analysis of recent research studies.

**Rationale for the course**
The purpose of this course is to provide educators with the forum in which they can explore the issues related to critical literacy and reflective pedagogy. As elements advocated by the International Reading Association in the Revised Standards for Reading Professionals (2003), literacy development, teacher reflection, and addressing the needs of diverse students are crucial elements for our classroom discussions on how literature can be used to promote critical literacy. To this end, all members of the class will engage in practices framed by constructivist theories such as Piaget and Inhelder (1969), Vygotsky (1979), Rogers (1989) and Bruner (1966), as well as the principles of learning (Cambourne,
2002). To support the principles of critical literacy and social change the course will also examine the ideas presented by theorists such as Freire (1998) and Giroux (1988).

**Course Objectives**

1. Examine and evaluate different theories on literacy development to determine the relationship between literacy acquisition through critical awareness, reflective pedagogy, and determine how various instructional practices impact the diverse needs of students. More specifically, through the exploration of how we can integrate children’s and adolescent literature into the curriculum.

2. Examine a range of essential issues as we consider the relationship between instructional standardization and student diversity to determine how instructional choices can influence students’ literacy development through critical exploration of literature.

3. Explore literacy standards to determine whose standards are being addressed, where they originate, and who determines those standards. To this end we will explore how these factors influence children’s literacy skills and practices in and out of school.

4. Examine how literacy standards impact students with linguistic, cultural, and economic differences.

5. Explore whether critical pedagogy helps improve teaching and create opportunities for learning, especially for linguistically and culturally diverse students.

6. Explore the social, cultural, structural, and political contexts within which classroom literacy standards are nested and how do we as educators negotiate the boundaries of such contexts to meet student needs.

7. Identify strategies teachers, parents and librarians can use to facilitate students’ interaction and exposure to a wide variety of literature.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Candidates will be able to:

1. Demonstrate their understanding of current theories and research in literacy by identifying theoretical elements of critical literacy and its connection(s) to reflective pedagogy.

2. Apply knowledge of critical literacy to critique elements of literature as it pertains to various social structures (e.g. culture, diversity, economics, politics).

3. Demonstrate their ability to distinguish between textual features that promote social awareness by creating assignments/activities that will help children make connections beyond the classroom, such as through the use of technology.

4. Demonstrate their knowledge of effective practices for literacy instruction by creating curriculum materials (such as lesson plans, unit plans, or guides) that can be used to support students’ critical literacy development.

5. Demonstrate an understanding of the implications for critical literacy in today’s classrooms, specifically how this framework addresses the multidimensional literacy needs of students with diverse learning styles and backgrounds.

**Disposition Outcomes**

Candidates will:

1. Model ethical professional behavior, use multiple indicators to judge professional growth, and reflect to make informed decisions that will improve instruction and other services to children who have reading difficulties.

2. View colleagues as professional resources and value the importance of collaboration to provide high quality instruction to students with reading difficulties.
3. Pursue knowledge of literacy professional journals and participate in professional development activities, including conferences by professional literacy organizations and workshops.

4. Develop an understanding of her/his values and beliefs about reading/literacy, the human dimensions of change, education and schooling, teaching, and the qualities she/he needs to be an effective supervisor of reading programs by reading required texts and completing class activities.

**Required Text(s):**
Readings are available as PDF files on Blackboard. They are also available through the Cheng Library Database (Academic Premier). Due dates for course readings can be found on the course schedule.


**Recommended Reading:**
A list of adolescent literature texts will be identified for literature circle discussions. Book clubs will be formed based on texts selections.

**Suggested Reading:**


Delpit, L., & Dowdy, J. (eds). (2003). *The skin that we speak: Thoughts on language and culture in the classroom.* W. W. Norton & Company

**Class Procedures and Requirements**

1. **Format for the class**
   Each session, students will be assigned to lead the class in discussion of the assigned reading in the Grainger text.

   PowerPoint presentations will be used for lectures. Questions will be posed based on readings and lectures. Students will work independently and in small groups to respond to questions and complete tasks.

2. **Attendance and active participation**
   The instructor believes that the purpose of the class is to foster a forum for exploring multiple perspectives and issues pertinent to graduate students. Attendance will be taken at every class meeting. You are expected to attend all sessions. Your active participation is necessary for each session. Documentation for an absence does not excuse you from your academic obligation. If you are absent it is your responsibility to get an update from classmates. **Active participation consists of “listening” or reviewing postings made by classmates and commenting on discussions and providing feedback to peers.** It is can be defined as commenting on class discussions, and providing feedback to peers. Active participation requires the periodic demonstration of leadership skills. In this role students lead the class in critical discussions about course readings, ask tough questions about conflicting perspectives, and make connections to real-world application of topics and theories discussed in class.

3. **Assignments**
   Students are expected to complete all assigned reading, and be prepared to contribute to class discussions. It is expected that all work will be turned in on time. Descriptions of each assignment can be found elsewhere in this syllabus. These descriptions provide additional information and guidelines for the task to help you successfully complete the assignment. Other resources accessible to you might also include rubrics, websites, and examples of the final product for assignments. When available these items will be posted on Blackboard.
Assignments should be done on time and with care. Assignments submitted late will not receive a grade higher than "B," although a note will be made of the quality. Papers receiving less than a passing grade may be rewritten and resubmitted so that the assignment is satisfactorily completed. Poorly written and/or carelessly proofread papers are sometimes returned un-graded until spelling, punctuation, and/or mechanical errors are corrected. Such papers ordinarily receive a grade of "C" or lower.

Unless otherwise informed by the instructor, all written work must be typed, using 12 inch Times New Roman font in black, 1 inch margins, and double-spaced. All assignments must be submitted to the instructor using the Digital Drop Box feature on Blackboard.

4. **Academic Integrity**
University guidelines regarding plagiarism will be diligently followed, including the use of plagiarism detection websites if needed. All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the WPU academic policy on plagiarism and academic integrity. ([http://ww2.wpunj.edu/StudentServices/policytemplate.cfm?plink=/policies/POLPROC/ACAD_INTEGRITY98.html](http://ww2.wpunj.edu/StudentServices/policytemplate.cfm?plink=/policies/POLPROC/ACAD_INTEGRITY98.html))

5. **Online Learning and Blackboard (http://bb.wpunj.edu/)**
This online course will use Blackboard. The class is scheduled to “meet” on designated days over the winter break. These sessions will be asynchronous. That means we do not have to be online at the same time.

Readings and assignments provide the opportunity for you to study and reflect on the topic. Discussions provide opportunities for you to communicate and interact with peers, share diverse perspectives, and reflect on your own beliefs about teaching and learning in secondary contexts. **Your initial discussion posting should be between 200 and 250 words.** When responding to a peer’s initial post you can ask a series of follow up questions for that individual to consider, provide an example to support or refute assertions made in that person’s post, or make a connection to ideas and insights gained from the posts. Connections can include examples observed during your practicum experience.

All class announcements will be posted on Blackboard. As previously mentioned, when they are available resources will periodically be uploaded to Blackboard to support your successful completion of the assignments.

**All communications should be made through your WPU email address.** No responses will be made to personal email addresses.

**Special Accommodations**
If you have a disability of any kind and require an accommodation, please speak to the instructor privately as soon as possible.

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**Tentative Schedule**

**Topical Outline and Course Readings**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic/ Agenda</th>
<th>Assignments to Submit/Complete (What is due on this date?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1   | Introduction to the Course  
1. Review of Course Expectations and Online Resources for Teaching and Learning  
2. Introduction to the community of learners |  |
| 2   | Context of 21st Century Literacy Development  
Gee (2000)  
Moje (2002) |
| 3   | Exploring Texts in Print and Non-print; Essential Questions for Examining Texts  
1. Strategies that promote students’ interaction with texts  
2. Video clips – literature circles; reading comprehension strategies that promote critical reading | **Read (jigsaw):** Groups collaborate to discuss/share insights gained from readings  
Moje (1999)...Group 1  
Sullivan (2002)...Group 2  
McDaniel (2004)...Group 3 |
| 4   | **Literature Circle meeting** |  |
| 5   | Instructional Approaches; Strategies for Teaching Literature  
1. Using literature to bring multiple perspectives into the classroom  
2. Balanced Literacy Classrooms  
3. Strategies for selecting appropriate literature (book lists, reviews, awards, WPU resources)  
4. Models for examining text and language use in texts | **Teaching Multicultural Literature: A Workshop for the Middle Grades. You do not have to register for the workshop.**  
Lea (2006) |
| 6   | **Collaborative Unit Plan Due** |  |
| 7   | **Literature Circle meeting** |  |
| 8   | 1. Using technology to promote student inquiry |  |
| 9   | 1. Strategies and contexts that get students to think critically about literature [“accountable talk”]  
2. Teacher questioning techniques  
3. Video clips – a look at students discussions about text, teachers’ mini lessons about text | **Read (jigsaw):** Groups collaborate to discuss/share insights gained from readings  
Luna (2003)....Group 1  
Rogers (2002)...Group 2  
DeBlase (2005)...Group 3 |
| 10  | **Literature Circle meeting** |  |
| 11  | Advocacy; Working with All Stakeholders  
1. Rethinking schools  
2. Teaching for social justice – defining, characterizing, and contextualizing social justice through classroom examples/ case study exploration and production  
3. Teaching for tolerance | Comber, Thomson, Wells (2001)  
Bean & Moni (2003) |
| 12  | **Wrap Up, Reflection, and Course Evaluation**  
**Text Analysis Paper Due** |  |
| 13  | **Literature Circle Project & Presentation due** |  |
| 14  | **Online summer session ends** |  |

**Description of Course Assessments**
**Collaborative Unit Plan (25%)**

**Due Day 6**
You will work with a group to develop a unit plan. Use the template provided. Your unit should be at least 1 week and it should address the literacy and technology standards, provide opportunity for students to develop their multiple literacies, promote critical literacy, and address diversity. Write a 1-2 page reflection of how the unit addresses these areas.

**Text Analysis (30%)**

**Due Day 12**
You will research one of the literary lens through which readers can examine text (see list [http://www.kristisiegel.com/theory.htm](http://www.kristisiegel.com/theory.htm)). Identify 3 literature books for children or adolescents that you will read. After reading the texts, evaluate them through the lens you researched. Write a 3-5 page paper presenting an overview of the literary theory, your interpretation of the text through that lens, the themes that emerged in the text, and the implications of this in today’s classroom. Prepare a 1-2 page handout of how teachers can use this theory and the texts you read to promote critical literacy in their classroom.

**Group Project – Literature Circle Multimedia Presentation (25%)**

**Due Day 13**

**Class Participation and Attendance (20%)**