# Course Syllabus

# Spring 2014

**Course**: CTSE 4150, Teaching English Language Arts I

Haley Center 2461, 9:30am-12:15pm, Tuesdays & Thursdays

**Instructor**: Brandon Sams, Assistant Professor of English Education

**Prerequsites:** Admission to Teacher Education

**Office**: 5052 Haley Center

**Phone**: 844-8286 (office); 615-828-4541 (cell)

**Email address**: [bls0023@auburn.edu](mailto:bls0023@auburn.edu)

[brandon.l.sams@gmail.com](mailto:Brandon.l.sams@gmail.com) (alternate in case AU email is down)

Email is the best way to contact me. I will do my best to respond within 24 hours.

**Office hours**: \*\* **Tues & Thurs: 12:30 – 2:30pm.** Other hours by appointment.

**Virtual office:** Via Skype, by appointment.

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**Texts:**

Anderson, J. (2005). *Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage, and Style into Writer’s*

*Workshop*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse.

Miller, Donalyn. (2009). *The Book Whisperer: Awakening the Reader in Every Child.* San

Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

\*\*Additional articles and pdf files available on Canvas. Under the “files” sidebar, I will create folders that correspond to class days & topics. Readings will be inside the folder. For electronic readings, please bring to class (physically or electronically) without resorting to using your smartphone. (see course schedule for authors and titles)

**Course Goals:**

As prospective teachers, my intention is for you to leave this course being able to…

1. Establish a positive learning climate for students so that they become valued and contributing members of an inclusive, intellectually curious classroom community.
2. Create an environment in which students’ interpretations are at once respected and challenged (when called for) and where students are encouraged to view texts from a variety of perspectives.
3. Support students as they write meaningfully in multiple genres and for diverse purposes.
4. Select a variety of texts (materials and resources)—print and nonprint; literary and nonliterary; textbooks and trade texts; technological—which are appropriate for students from diverse backgrounds and with different skill levels and which are fitting to educational goals developed from standards set by local, state, national and professional agencies.
5. Use the Common Core State Standards to create reading and writing instruction -- while maintaining one’s critical judgement regarding the (possible) shortcomings of the stardards.
6. Plan appropriately for whole-class and small-group reading of (and/or viewing of, listening to) teacher-selected texts, including setting goals and determining time necessary; determining resources and instruction needed (including appropriate use of technology); deciding on appropriate student activities; and determining appropriate assessment and evaluation.
7. Plan appropriately for individualized, self-paced, and self-selected reading.
8. Use a variety of strategies such as cooperative learning, discussion, discovery, problem-based learning, and direct instruction in your teaching of the English language arts.
9. Vary your teaching roles such as instructor, facilitator, coach, listener, and evaluator.
10. Alter your teaching plans appropriately based on student responses, teacher observation, and formal and informal assessment.
11. Use a variety of informal and formal means of assessment and evaluation.

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# Expectations & Policies:

I expect students to attend all scheduled class meetings, arrive on time and not leave early, come prepared, and contribute by participating in discussions and activities.

**Absences**. The university considers certain absences to be “excused,” and I abide by university guidelines. For what constitutes excused absences, see the latest edition of the Student Policy eHandbook; the URL is [www.auburn.edu/studentpolicies](http://www.auburn.edu/studentpolicies).

If you have to be absent, please follow the procedures teachers do. That is, just as teachers make arrangements ahead of time for a known absence, so, too, you must make arrangements ahead of time for a known absence. Just as teachers must notify their schools as soon as possible for an emergency absence such as illness, so, too, you must notify me as soon as possible for an emergency absence such as illness. Send me an email.

To discuss an absence, see me during office hours, or check with me by email. (See below, “Make-up work.”)

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| A single absence will not alarm me; repeated absences will, especially for students who are so near to internship. Being present—and involved—are the signs of maturity and professionalism. |

**Tardies**. Make every effort to be on time for class in Haley. Coming in late, no matter how quiet you try to be, will be a disruption. Again, a single tardy will not set off alarm bells; a pattern of tardies will.

**Absences from fieldwork.** You must make every effort to be present, and on time, in your assigned classroom on fieldwork days. If you are ill, however, you must: 1) contact the school office and leave a message for the teacher 2) email the teacher 3) email me 4) notify your field teammates so they can deliver the message to the teacher. You are also responsible for 1) getting a teammate to substitute for you (if you are responsible for teaching) and 2) making up the missed field day *on your own time*.

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| **NOTE**. Being tardy to your school on a fieldwork day is not professional behavior and will not be tolerated. The earlier you arrive, the better able you will be to participate as a teacher. |

**Make-up work**. If you are absent, you are still responsible for turning in work that’s due and for finding out about material presented and assignments made. As per the Student eHandbook, you are the one responsible for initiating and turning in make-up work for an excused absence. To help you in this regard, prompts for quick writes, quizzes, and other such in-class activities will be posted after class.

**Note**: Full credit will not be given for work missed due to an unexcused absence.

**Late work**. I do not give full credit for work turned in late. The penalty is half a letter grade per day. Work is late if it’s not ready at the start of class on the specified due date or if it is not sent electronically on the due date.

**University rules**. I abide by all university rules, including those concerning academic honesty and harassment/discrimination.

**Accommodations**. Students who need accommodations are asked to electronically submit their approved accommodations through AU Access and to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. If you have a conflict with my office hours, an alternate time can be arranged. To set up this meeting, please contact me by e-mail. If you have not established accommodations through the Office of Accessibility, but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center, 844-2096.

# Contingency statement

If there is an emergency and I am to be absent from class, I will make every effort to send you an email message ahead of time (or have one sent to you by a departmental assistant).

If the university closes for emergency or crisis situation, I may have to modify the syllabus, the course plans, and other assignments. If this happens, I will replace the original assignment schedule with one having an addendum. I’ll do the same to assignments already published.

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**Course Requirements/Evaluation:**

**Daybook Journal & Participation: 15%**

**Reflective Letters: 10%**

**Teaching Demonstrations: 20%**

**Student Writing Project: 10%**

**Field Experience Activities: 15%**

**Pedagogical Reading Journals/Snap-Shot Unit: 15%**

**Final Unit Plan/PWS: 15%**

**Daybook Journal & Class Participation: 15%**

The daybook will be a central component of class and your field experience. Think of your daybook as your “thinking book” where you collect your thoughts, questions, and reflections about course readings, teaching, and your experience in your field setting. We will use writing to learn in this class, and the daybook is the main place where you will store your writing. I hope you will write in your daybook frequently throughout the week, but you will be required to write entries at least twice a week for class. For class days in Haley, when there are course readings, come to class prepared with an entry in your daybook. You can write these entries in a way that is most useful to you. I am most concerned that you engage with the readings. Ask questions about them. Critique them. Praise what you find useful or helpful. Notice continuities and/or contradictions among readings. Why might these ideas or texts be significant? What do you still want to know? Pose questions that you would like the group to consider. Be active in your preparation.

For your days out in schools observing and teaching, compose an entry for each visit. What are you observing that is significant? Who is the teacher? Who are the students? How does your field placement experience challenge or confirm what we are reading in the course? If you are teaching, write about those important experiences as well. What are you teaching? How are you approaching the tasks you have been assigned? What is surprising, troubling, or encouraging?

For your daybook entries, I will sometimes check during class to see that you have completed your entry. Other times, I will ask you to copy your entry or send me a .jpg file. I will not check your entries every class period, but I will check periodically throughout the semester (this includes “borrowing” your daybook for a brief moment) to make sure you are keeping up with your writing and that you are doing it thoughtfully.

To start your daybook, buy a composition book from the AU bookstore in Haley Center. These are about $1.50. If you are into Moleskine or some other brand, you can purchase one, but you don’t need to spend much money. Feel free to decorate or adorn your daybook as you like, now and as the semester grows. Do not use a spiral notebook for your daybook. Use a composition book with spine and or binding.

Class participation is very important for your learning, the learning of your peers, and mine. While bringing and writing in your daybook constitutes a major form of class participation, you also show your participation in class in the following ways: being on time; bringing necessary books and readings to class; participating in instructional activities designed by me or your peers; asking questions and contributing to class discussions; participating on Canvas when prompted to by me or your peers. Excessive absences and tardies will lower your class participation score, as will forgetting your daybook.

**Reflective Letters:** **10%**

Every three to four weeks, you will write a reflective letter about what you are learning from course readings and your field experience. Questions you can consider when writing the letter include: What am I starting to re-think about teaching, reading, writing or literature? What am I excited about? What is troubling me? Given what I am learning, what questions now seem most important? You should incorporate lines of thought from your daybook, from course readings, from class discussions, or from field experience. Take care that your letters are grammatically and mechanically sound. Send these letters to me in an MS word file via email. Each letter needs to be at least 500 words. Letters are due to me by 11:59pm on the due date. If your email is not working or your computer malfunctions, give yourself enough time to drop off a hardcopy to my office bin (on the door).

**Teaching Demonstrations: 20%**

There are two teaching demonstrations, described below. A sign-up sheet will be distributed soon.

1. *Literature Workshop* + *Reading Report and Reflection* – using Blau and class literature workshops as a model, you will lead the class in a reading, analysis, and discussion of a poem (or a piece of short/flash fiction). The workshop style will become more clear soon, but involves the teacher leading the class through a sequence of silent reading, sharing ideas and questions with other readers in small groups, and whole class discussions. You will be in the role of teacher and facilitator and will be responsible for taking us through the steps of the workshop that you design. This will be a really fun and exhilarting experience for you! We will discuss what poems will be appropriate later, but I want you to take risks and challenge yourself. In addition to leading the workshop, you will compose a brief reading process report that takes into account your reading experience and questions that you experienced as you prepared to teach this poem to us. Additionally, I will ask you to compose a reflection on the workshop itself. What was surprising, confirming, disappointing, or amazing? What went according to plan? What did not? Was your reading challenged or confirmed? How did you negotiate between competing or contradictory readings that the class offered? What is important for you to consider in the future as a teacher? The reading report, actual lesson, and written reflection will constitute your grade for this assignment.
2. *Grammar/Mechanics Workshop* – completed in groups of 2. Using part 2 of our book *Mechanically Inclined*  as a model, you will lead us in a short grammar and mechanics exercise. You will be required to define a grammar and mechanics problem, gives examples of the error that students might make, discuss the source of the error, use mentor texts to frame the error as a craft issue, and design a short mini-lesson to help us understand and/or correct the problem in the context of our writing or reading.

**Student Writing Project: 10%**

The student writing project asks you to read, analyze, and reflect on real samples of student writing. You will be required to respond, as a teacher, to particular papers; designs rubrics to evaluate the writing; and reflect on possible mini-lessons you would use to help these students improve their writing.

**Fieldwork Experience Activities: 15%**

Host schools for this semester include Loachapoka High School, Notasulga High School, Sanford Middle School, Opelika Middle School, and Auburn Junior High. You will likely begin your school visits in early February on Thursdays and continue until early April. A very likely pattern will be Haley Center class on Tuesday and field visits on Thursday. You will likely get to experience **two field placements** this semester – meaning you will spend 4-5 weeks in one placement, followed by 4-5 weeks in the second placement location. During your school visits, you are expected to comport yourself professionally. This means being on time; dressing appropriately; coming prepared to observe and/or participate as a teacher; being in dialogue with your teacher about your role.Your performance as a teacher and your professionalism will constitute your field experience grade as will a written evaluation of your performance by your host teachers. In your field placement, you will often perform as a teacher. For example, you will be asked to help students individually, grade student work, lead small group discussions or workshops, lead whole-class activities, and otherwise plan and lead instruction for literature, reading, writing, and language pedagogy. We will discuss this in much richer detail as the time for field experience approaches. Keep in mind that when you are out in the schools, you are representing Auburn University, this department, yourself, your classmates, and me. Your professionalism really, really matters.

Note: You need to present your school office with a current, negative TB test and your emergency contact information sheet. I will pass out EC sheets in class. You also need to wear an Auburn name tag, which you can obtain in the PES office and/or LRC for about $3 dollars.

**Pedagogical Reading Journal/Snap Shot Unit: 15%**

It is my hope to read a longer piece of fiction together with you. In my past methods courses, reading fiction together with students is a thoroughly instructive (and fun) experience. What we read will become more clear as I get to know you better and as your field placements become more clear. As we read this piece of fiction together, you will compose 2-3 pedagogical reading journals that highlight your experience as a reader and your ideas for teaching. Your ideas for teaching the novel can be based on (or build off of) our class readings and discussions or can be original to you. You can use the Blau readings and other course readings on teaching fiction and organizing instruction to help compose your ideas.

The snap shot unit is 2-3 lesson plans based on the novel we read together. In this snap shot unit, I would like to see examples of lessons you would use to teach our shared novel; how would you lead discussion? Or how would you introduce this novel to students? How would you incorporate grammar and vocabular instruction while teaching this work? What kind of formal writing would you assign? I am interested in your approach to these questions. Consider the Common Core standards. Take risks. Use your experience and our readings. Design lessons that you (as a student) would want to do.

**Final Unit/Practice PWS : 15%**

Your final unit plan will be a combination of you engaging with the planning questions of the Professional Work Sample, and your composition of a 4-5 day unit plan that incorporates instruction on reading, writing, mechanics, differentiation, and assessment. The final unit plans are due Monday, April 28th.

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**Course Schedule**

(subject to adjustment as needed)

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| **Date** | **Topic** | **Readings Due** | **Assignments Due** |
| 01/09 (R) | Introductions  Syllabus | None | \*Buy Daybook for Class |
| 01/14 (T) | No Class: Dr. Sams Confernece Travel |  |  |
| 01/16 (R) | What is Literature Workshop? | Blau, Intro “Principles for Practice”  Blau, Ch. 1, “Stories from the Classroom”  *Book Whisperer*, p. 1-18  *Mechanically Inclined*, p. 3-14 |  |
| 01/21 (T) | Workshop Continued  Book Whisperings | Blau, Ch. 2, “From Telling to Teaching,” p. 34-59  *BW*, p. 21-37  *MI*, p. 15-26 |  |
| 01/23 (R) | Introducing the Workshop Approach  Culturally Relevant Pedagogy | Blau, Ch. 3, “Which Internpretation is the Right One?”  G. Ladson-Billings,  “But that is Just Good Teaching!”  Smiley & Helfenbein, “Becoming Teachers: Payne Effect” |  |
| 01/28 (T) | More Blau – How Much Background Information Do We Need?  Getting Critical | Blau, Ch. 4, “Intertextual Literacy”  Curwood et al., “Fight for your Right: Censorship, Selection, and LGBTQ Literature”  Fair, “Addressing Sexuality in Literature: Teachers’ Perceptions and Comfort Levels”  Silin, “Reading, Writing, and the Wrath of My Father” |  |
| 01/30 (R) | Writing in the Curriculum (Guest Speaker & Presenter, Mrs. Susan Cook) | *MI,* 27-50  *BW*, 39-68 | **LW #1** |
| 02/04 (T) | Finalizing Field Placement Issues  Catching up With *MI* and *BW*  Introducing our Novel  Using Discussion | *MI, 51-59*  *BW,* 69-97  Brookfield, “Discussion as a Way of Teaching” | **LW #2** |
| 02/06 (R) | Field Experience | Prepare for Field Placement |  |
| 02/11 (T) | Fiction Reading  How to Build Background Knowledge – Or should I? | Fiction, TBA  NCTE and ReadWriteThink articles | **LW #3**  **GM #1** |
| 02/13 (R) | Field Experience | Prepare for Field Placement |  |
| 02/18 (T) | Fiction Reading  How Should I Support Students Reading During the Novel?  What Can Daily Instruction While Reading Look Like? | Fiction, cont’d  Brown, “I’ll Have Mine Annotated, Please”  Narter, “Pencils Down”  *BW*, 121-151 | **LW #4**  **GM #2** |
| 02/20 (R) | Field Experience | Prepare for Field Placement |  |
| 02/25 (T) | Fiction Reading  What Kind of Writing Should I Require of My Students When Reading/After Reading? | Fiction, cont’d  Blau, Ch. 8  Burke, *Writing Reminders* | **LW #5**  **GM #3** |
| 02/27 (R) | Field Experience | Prepare for Field Placement |  |
| 03/04 (T) | Fiction Reading  Assigning Writing about Literature and Assessing It | Fiction, cont’d  Blau, 8 (Cont’d)  Burke, *Writing Reminders* (cont’d)  Theme Essay Examples | **LW #6**  **GM #4** |
| 03/06 (R) | Field Experience | Prepare for Field Placement |  |
| 03/11 (T) | Spring Break  ------------------ | No Class  ------------------- |  |
| 03/13 (R) | Spring Break  ----------------- | No Class  ------------------- |  |
| 03/18 (T) | Differiented Instruction  Assigning and Evaluating Expository Reading  Introduce Student Writing Project | Selections from Tomlinson  Selections from Burke, *Writing Reminders*  NCTE and ReadWriteThink selections | **LW #7**  **GM #5** |
| 03/20 (R) | Field Experience | Prepare for Field Placement | **Snap Shot Unit Due** |
| 03/25 (T) | Assigning and Evaluating Persuasive Writing  Student Writing Project, Cont’d | NCTE and ReadWriteThink Selections  Burke, *Writing Reminders*  *BW, 152-177* | **LW #8, 9**  **GM #6** |
| 03/27 (R) | Student Writing Project  Introduce Final Unit | No Placement -- Work on Student Writing Project in Class | **LW #10, 11**  **GM #7** |
| 04/01 (T) | Field Placement | Prepare for Field Placement |  |
| 04/03 (R) | Field Placement | Prepare for Field Placement |  |
| 04/08 (T) | Final Unit Assignment | TBA | **LW #12, 13**  **GM # 8** |
| 04/10 (R) | Field Placement | Prepare for Field Placement |  |
| 04/15 (T) | Final Unit Workshop in Haley - Bring Reading & Writing Materials  Topics of Student Interest | TBD | **LW #14, 15**  **GM # 9 (if Necessary)** |
| 04/17 (R) | Unit Workshop in Haley —  Bring Reading & Writing Materials |  | **LW #16** |
| 04/22 (T) | Unit Presentations in Haley | Unit Presenations |  |
| 04/24 (R) | Unit Presentations in Haley | Unit Presentations |  |

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**The College of Education’s Statement on Professionalism**

As faculty, staff, and students interact in professional settings, they are expected to demonstrate professional behaviors as defined in the College’s conceptual framework. These professional commitments or dispositions are listed below:

* Engage in responsible and ethical professional practices.
* Contribute to collaborative learning communities.
* Demonstrate a commitment to diversity.
* Model and nurture intellectual vitality.

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**Fieldwork**

By rules of the Alabama State Code for Teacher Education, all methods classes such as CTSE 4150 and 4160 must have a required laboratory component, meaning that students in methods classes are required to spend time in the field, observing and working with teachers and students.

My requests for your fieldwork sites have been approved. Presently, 9 (10) teachers have agreed to host and mentor you. Our host schools are Loachapoka High, Notasulga High, Opelika Middle, Sanford Middle, and Auburn Junior High.

As indicated on the schedule, we will meet for about a month in Haley, 2 days per week. In early February, you will begin your observations in your fieldwork school. On Thursdays, you will be at your school, roughly during the time our class meets; on Tuesdays, you will be back in Haley with our class here. There are a few exceptions to this pattern to account for spring break. I will keep you updated on any changes ahead of time.

My intent is to pair or group you for fieldwork. Because of scheduling, some of you may go to your field school at times outside the normal 9:30-12 time block. You will begin your fieldwork by doing more observation than teaching. When you are teaching, I plan to observe (and provide feedback), making the rounds between schools and among teachers as I can.

To meet the hours required by the State Board, you may have to do additional fieldwork outside our class meeting hours. More on this later, as I work out details with principals and teachers.

**Recommendation**

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) publishes research and information that can help you with just about anything in your professional life: teaching memoir or poetry; using controversial literature in your classroom; rethinking assessment; teaching all kinds of writing – you name it. The NCTE journals that will be helpful to you include *English Journal*, *Voices from the Middle*, and *English Education*. The student rate for a year membership is very reasonable. Details are at the NCTE web site <www.ncte.org>.