# Course Syllabus

# Spring 2022



“If we are not doing equity, we are not doing education” (Cornelius Minor)

“The best thing about teaching is that it matters. The hardest thing about teaching is that it matters every day” (Carol Yago)

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

Miller 226

8:00-10:50 MW

**Instructor**: Dr. Mike Cook, Associate Professor of English Education

**Prerequsites:** Admission to Teacher Education

**Office**: 5056 Haley Center

**Phone**: 844-4415 (office); 828-320-0917 (cell)

**Email address**: [mpc0035@auburn.edu](mailto:mpc0035@auburn.edu)

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

**Office hours**: 11:00-12:00 Mon. & 4:00-5:00 Wed**.** Other hours by appointment. We can also visit via phone or skype, depending on the issue.

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**Course Texts:**

Germán, L.E. (2021). *Textured teaching: A framework for culturally sustaining practices*. Heinemann.

Love, B.L. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom*. Beacon Press.

Milner, H.R., Cunningham, H.B., Delale-O’Connor, L., & Kestenberg, E.G. (2019). *“These kids are out of control”: Why we must reimagine “classroom management” for equity*. Corwin.

You will also purchase 2 graphic novels from Comixology and additional texts as required by your peers (for Student-Led Teaching). We will make every effort to keep these costs as low as possible.

\*Alabama ELA Course of Study

\*NCTE Teacher Preparation Standards

\*Key to your success as a teacher is to know standards. You are expected to familiarize yourself with these.

For all readings, please bring a copy of the text to class (physically or electronically) without resorting to using your smartphone.

Additional readings will be provided.

I also encourage you to become student members of NCTE and consider subscribing to one of their journals (English Journal is great for high school and Voices from the Middle is excellent for middle school)

* Student Membership: $25.00
* Student fee for journals: $12.50

**Course Goals:**

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

1. Describe the complexities of being an English teacher.
2. Create an environment in which students’ interpretations are at once respected and challenged (when called for) and where students (and you) are encouraged to view texts from a variety of perspectives.
3. Select a variety of texts (materials and resources)—print and nonprint; literary and nonliterary; textbooks and trade texts; multimedia—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.
4. Develop instruction using the Common Core State Standards.
5. Plan lessons using backwards planning design principles.
6. Plan appropriately for individualized, self-paced, and self-selected reading.
7. Learn about and incorporate multiliteracies and multimodality into your reading and writing instruction.
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, formal and informal assessment, and general reflection.
11. Use a variety of informal and formal means of assessment and evaluation.
12. Exhibit general knowledge on several topics related to the teaching of English Language Arts.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

NCTE Teacher Preparation Standards

I. Candidates demonstrate knowledge of English language arts subject matter content that specifically includes literature and multimedia texts as well as knowledge of the nature of adolescents as readers.

II. Candidates demonstrate knowledge of English language arts subject matter content that specifically includes language and writing as well as knowledge of adolescents as language users.

IV. Candidates plan instruction and design assessments for composing texts (i.e., oral, written, and visual) to promote learning for all students.

VI. Candidates demonstrate knowledge of how theories and research about social justice, diversity, equity, student identities, and schools as institutions can enhance students’ opportunities to learn in English Language Arts.

VII. Candidates are prepared to interact knowledgeably with students, families, and colleagues based on social needs and institutional roles, engage in leadership and/or collaborative roles in English Language Arts professional learning communities, and actively develop as professional educators.

**Assessment**

Let me open with this: I believe that grades generally get in the way of learning. This, of course, has consequence for teaching, for student growth, for our democracy, and (I might add) for humanity. As a result, “grading” in this class may be radically different than anything you’ve experienced in your prior schooling (with the exception of those who took CTSE 5020 last semester).

While final course grades are unavoidable (Auburn requires that you each receive a letter grade), your individual and group work will NOT receive grades. But…and this is key…there are a few requirements you will have to meet for your assignments to be officially “turned in.” Requirements for each assignment include, but are not limited to:

* Submitting initial drafts on/by relevant due dates
* Engaging in required revisions (sometimes multiple rounds) and resubmitting on/by relevant due dates

Final assignments will not be considered accepted (and turned in) until all rounds of required revision have been successfully/adequately completed. Once an assignment is accepted, it is understood to represent the equivalent of an ‘A’. **Note:** It is important to keep in mind that while I have a no grade policy, your course requirements are just that—requirements and not options.

The real idea here is to remove grades as a barrier to learning and growth and to make your experiences in this course more about learning itself and about developing as teachers, and not about the grade. Designing instruction and teaching are iterative processes, those we never master but use experience, feedback, and even failure to develop and get better. Thus, grading individual assignments is inauthentic in this course. I want you to grow as ELA teachers and as people tasked with providing relevant, equitable, and just educational experiences to your future students. I want you (and your future students) to focus on something other than competition and about focusing on what one needs for an ‘A’. Instead, I want you all to focus on what you need to do to improve and to grow. And I want to make your learning and your development as teachers humane and useful.

We’ll be talking quite a bit about this throughout the semester, and I look forward to your thoughts and perceptions. \*I am more than happy to schedule time to chat with any of you if you have questions or concerns.

**Note:** During the first two weeks of the semester, we will collaboratively establish the grading expectations, requirements, and consequences for this course. I believe this should be a team and democratic effort, and I hope this serves as one example of how you can include your future students in such discussions and classroom policy development. Among the policies we will establish together are:

* “Grading” policies
  + Due date expecatations and consequences
  + Procedures for managing issues that inevitably arise (i.e., being proactive)
  + Attendance expectations
* Classroom norms
  + Discussions—creating a supportive and critical space for difficult and complex issues
  + Accountability
  + Creating space for and talking about race
  + Language

After we collaboratively create these policies, I will add them to the syllabus and share a final version with each of you.

**Collaborative Course Policies**

**Coming Soon**

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**Course Requirements/Evaluation**

**Class and Online Participation**

**Clinical Experiences**

**Student-Led Thematic Teaching**

**Response to Student-Led Teaching**

**COAR Social Action Project and Unit Plan Framework**

**ELA Program Common Book Discussions**

**30 Minutes of Choice Reading**

**Class & Online Participation**

As this class will work like a Professional Learning Community (PLC), you will be expected to contribute meaningfully to all readings, topics, and content. Your participation in class activities, whether face to face (in class and on Zoom), in asynchronous assignments, and through CANVAS discussions will help you build knowledge together and explore various aspects of the readings to apply them to your own future teaching. In order to participate, you must be present (both physically and cognitively) and have completed the assigned readings, bringing each with you to relevant class meetings. Ongoing failure to meaningfully contribute to class activities and collaborative knowledge and/or to attend class may result in action plans or other necessary steps.

**Clinical Experiences**

Classroom visits will begin early around early February and will continue through approximately mid-April. To ensure you get a range of experiences, you will have two placements—one for the first half of the semester and another for the second half. During your classroom visits, you are expected to comport yourself professionally – which 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*. As part of your Clinical Experience, you will often perform as a teacher. You may begin your fieldwork by doing more observation than teaching; this is normal (even for Clinical Residency). You will, however, have opportunities to: help students individually, grade student work, lead small group discussions or workshops, lead whole-class activities, and/or otherwise plan and lead instruction for literature, reading, writing, and grammar. Keep in mind that when you are out in classrooms, you are representing Auburn University, this department and program, your classmates, and yourself. Your professionalism really, really matters.

The Alabama State Department of Education requires you to have a diversity of clinical experiences across your time in the program. Toward that end, as part of CTSE 4150 you will complete at least 40 hours in local schools. I have done my best to set specific class meeting dates aside as “lab days” in order to help you toward meeting this requirement. That said, a significant amount of outside of class time will be required to complete your hours. \*Please note: You are responsible for ensuring you complete all required hours. You are responsible for working with your teacher and placement school to meet the required number of hours.

**Time Log:** Each student will keep a time log and record his/her arrival and departure time from school placements. These will be signed/initialed by you and your teacher. More to come on this.

**Other Requirements for Clinical Experiences:**

* Be on time. Being tardy is a disruption and is unprofessional behavior.
* It is also vital you work with your teacher to create a plan/schedule for your attendance. Knowing this information will help the teacher plan to involve you in classroom activities—it’s very difficult for them to do this if they do not know when you will be there.
* You should make every effort to be there regularly (rather than putting in a bunch of hours one week and not going back for another 2-3 weeks). You should also work with your teacher to create a

**Absences from fieldwork:** You must make every effort to be present 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 AND copy me on the email, and 3) notify your field teammates so they may 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 that day) and 2) making up the missed field day *on your own time and as soon as possible for you and the teacher*.

I also ask that you each keep a clinical experience journal. As part of your clinical experience (i.e., the video case studies), you will keep a journal representing your in-the-moment thoughts and your after-the-fact reflections. The goal here is to promote observation, inquiry, and metacognition and to then use those to make sense of the teaching profession and of yourselves as teachers. Within your journals, you should note:

* Exemplar moments
* Questions you have
* Noticings
* Problems encountered
* Critiques and/or concerns
* And so forth

This should be a hard copy, tangible journal so you can take it with you each time you visit a classroom. You should bring this with you to all class meetings, as we will use your entries to further our discussions and learning together. In other words, you should always be prepared if asked to share from your journal to jumpstart or add to our in-class discussions. Note that I may ask for these from time to time.

**COVID-19 Information**: All students participating in clinical experiences are required to complete the COVID-19 Personal Health Screening Form before reporting to the site each day. If your responses result in a GREEN, “Cleared” screen for that day, proceed to the placement site to complete regularly scheduled activities. If your responses result in a RED, “Not Cleared” screen, do NOT report to the placement site and complete the following tasks:

1. Immediately contact your Instructor and your clinical educator to inform them that you will not be present at the site for the day.
2. Follow any additional directions as specified.

At the top of the Home page on our Canvas site, you will find a Module titled “COVID-19 Personal Health Screening Form.” This will link you to the daily screening form on Qualtrics. I have also posted a copy of the College of Education COVID Procedures under that same module.

Note: You are also required to wear a mask to all field placements for the entirety of the semester, regardless of the mask policies for your sites.

**Student Led Teaching**

Working in groups, you will design and facilitate a two-week thematic unit designed around a critical and socially relevant issue. Your classmates will serve as your students, providing you time and space to try out ideas, to plan and implement instruction, to provide feedback, to reflect on and learn from your own teaching, and to explore the role(s) of teacher.

You will be responsible for selecting and assigning readings, activities, assignments, and so forth. As part of your planning, you will meet with me to discuss your plans, to ensure you have planned appropriately, an to make sure you have everything you need to teach your lessons.

Please see the Student-Led Teaching Units Assignment sheet for additional details, requirements, deadlines, etc.

**Response to Teaching Demonstrations:**

You will also respond to the teaching demonstrations of others. Each group will provide an evaluation survey at the conclusion of their unit, and all students will provide thoughtful, honest, and critically-kind feedback. The goal here is to learn from and with one another and to promote meaningful reflection (which is where growth as a teacher takes place).

**COAR Social Action Project and Unit Plan Framework**

As part of this course you will be tasked with identifying, researching, and addressing a social issue you deem important. This assignment will ask you to strike your own balance between actively engaging with the world as an individual and using your instructional design to engage your students outside the classroom. In other words, you will *do* and *teach*. See the COAR assignment sheet for more information. We’ll also talk in detail about this in class.

**ELA Program Common Book Discussions**

This semester, every Auburn ELA program course is including *We Want to Do More than Survive* as a required text. In addition to reading the text, you are expected to attend at least one of our program-wide book discussions. The expectation is that you read the book in its entirety and come to the meeting prepared, with an open mind, to do the necessary but complex work of discussing race/ism and antiracism in society and education, specifically in ELA education. In an effort to accommodate everyone’s schedules, we are offering two days/times for our program book discussion. We ask that you attend one of them (although you are certainly welcome at both).

* Thursday, April 7 6:00-7:00pm
* Friday, April 8, 10:00-11:00am

We’ll provide more information on location as we get closer to the time and can assess COVID numbers. While we hope to hold this discussion face-to-face, we may make the decision to utilize Zoom if it feels safter for everyone.

**30 Minutes of Choice Reading**

The final 30 minutes of each Wednesday class meeting will be set aside for choice reading. You are expected to bring something to read with you to class every Wednessday. This cannot be reading for another class (or required reading for this class). Instead, this is dedicated time for you to read something *you* want to read. We know that student choice in reading can go a long way toward reading engagement and enjoyment, and as teachers, we need to do this work as well—that is, it is vital we love reading if we have any hope of helping our students to. As part of choice reading, we will occassionally do brief booktalks, where we share with our classmates what we’re reading, a bit about its content (trying not to give too much away), and how/if/why we’re enjoying it. Sometimes the best book recommendations come from those we care about and those whose reading habits are different than our own.

Note: This is not “free time” to do homework or other activities but a requirement of the course. It can be difficult, especially as English majors, to find time to read for pleasure, so it’s important we all take advantage of this opportunity.

**Additional Assignments for Alternative Master’s Students**

**Additional Clinical Experiences**

While you will already spend quite a bit of time in area classrooms as part of this course, as alternative master’s students, I expect you to go beyond the hours gained by your undergraduate colleagues. To fulfill this expectation, you will need to spend an additional 15 hours (minimum) in classrooms, working with teachers and students. Please note that it is your responsibility to discuss and schedule these with teachers and complete them on your own time (i.e., above, beyond, and outside of our class time and related expectations).

**Problem of Practice—Practitioner Research Essay**

As part of your Clinical Experiences, including our discussions in class, you will identify a problem of practice in secondary ELA classrooms and teaching. After identifying the issue, you will work to identify potential solutions. You are welcome (and, in fact, encouraged) to enlist the support of the classroom ELA teachers you’ll already be working with as you consider solutions to the issue you’ve chosen. You will also dig into the scholarly literature to make a case for solutions. By scholarly literature, in this case, I refer to quality practitioner journals such as *English Journal*, *Voices from the Middle*, *ALAN Review*, and so forth. I am happy to talk with you about other titles. Using your work with teachers and your scholarly readings, you will compose a teacher essay in which you make your case for solutions. Please treat this as a research essay (include and appropriately cite using APA scholarly references and the intellectual property of others—namely the teachers you worked with). Your final product should be approximately 6-8 pages (not including references). I’ll meet with each of you to finalize topics, due dates, and other related requirements.

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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.

**A Note on Shared Teaching Resources**

Although all educators are glad to share their teaching materials, for the purposes of academic integrity it is essential that you cite all uses and incorporation of materials that you obtain from others and turn in as class assignments or utilize in your own teaching. Acknowledgement is key in maintaining academic honesty.

**Recommendation**

Widen your circle of influence. Become a member of The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the Alabama Council of Teachers of English (ACTE), the Literacy Research Association (LRA), or the International Literacy Association (ILA). Visit their webpages and view their resources. Like the facebook pages of these and related groups devoted to the teaching of English. Visit readwritethink.org or <http://www.nwp.org/> (National Writing Project) to find teaching resources.

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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.

You are allowed one unexcused absences from course meetings. For any unexcused absence beyond one, there will be a 3-point deduction from your final course grade. To discuss an absence, see me during office hours, or check with me by email. (See below, “Make-up work.”)

**Tardies**. Make every effort to be on time for class. 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*. **NOTE**. Being tardy on a fieldwork day is not professional behavior and will not be tolerated.

**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**: See collaboratively designed grading policies above.

**Late work**. See collaboratively designed grading policies above.

**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.