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# Curriculum and Teaching in English Language Arts Education

# Spring 2022

**Course**: CTSE 7520, Curriculum Trends and Issues in ELA Education

**Day/Time:** Wednesday 5:00-7:50, Haley 2461

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

**Office Hours:** 11:00-12:00 M, 4:00-5:00 W, and by appointment

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**Course Description**

*From the university course bulletin: Nature of learners and of knowledge and implications for building curricula and planning instruction in the area of specialization..*

Adolescents come to schools both with a tremendous amount of literacy and language resources and a need for continuing support so that they can sustain, extend, and bridge their reading and writing capabilities across content areas and also with their everyday lives. Indeed, as people move within and across various contexts and communities across their lifespans, it is an ongoing endeavor to learn how to participate in these contexts and communities in ways that are valued by the group yet remain personally meaningful and affirming. These opportunities are fundamentally shaped by people’s individual biographies and personalities as well as their identities, such as their race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, religion or faith, nationality, dis/ability status, and language(s)

This course engages students in broader questions of knowledge and learning with respect to adolescent literacy and language practices with an emphasis on the implications for teaching and curriculum in secondary English language arts (ELA) classrooms. It is organized into four major sections. The first two sections offer “Contexts” (Justice in Schools and Communities and Race and ELA) and open up questions about knowledge and learning by exploring identity, power, knowledge, and learning with respect to adolescents/ce and secondary schooling. They serve to situate the remaining two sections of the course by providing foundational insights about schooling, power, identity, and education’s liberatory possibilities. The next two sections explore the concept of Advocacy and the possibilities of/in Literature Instruction (or Critical Literary Analysis). Each topic will be situated in the opening “Contexts” sections’ insights, helping to develop nuanced understandings about how the intertwined threads of the language arts classroom are influenced by and in turn influence schooling and community contexts.

**Texts:**

Appleman, D. (2015). *Critical encounters in secondary English: Teaching literary theory to adolescents*. Teachers College Press. THIRD EDITION

Fleischer, C. & Garcia, A. (2021). *Everyday Advocacy: Teachers who change the literacy narrative*. W.W. Norton & Company.

Johnson, L.L. (2022). Critical Race English Education. Routledge.

Kinloch, V., Nemeth, E.A., Butler, T.T., & Player, G.D. (2021). *Where is the justice? Engaged pedagogies in schools and communities*. Teachers College Press.

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

Additional course content will be available in Canvas. Please bring the readings to any virtual class meetings.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate their ability with the following NCTE/NCATE Standards for Teachers of Secondary English Language Arts:

Content Knowledge

1. 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.
2. 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.

Content Pedagogy: Planning Literature and Reading Instruction in ELA

1. Candidates plan instruction and design assessments for reading and the study of literature to promote learning for all students.

Content Pedagogy: Planning Composition Instruction in ELA

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

Learners and Learning: Implementing English Language Arts Instruction

1. context-based needs.

Professional Knowledge and Skills

1. 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.
2. 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.

While final course grades are unavoidable (Auburn requires that you each receive a letter grade), your work throughout the semester 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 assessments and teaching itself 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 scholars 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 any necessary course policies, norms, expectations, consequences, etc. 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 may establish together are:

* Due Dates
	+ Expectations and consequences
	+ Managing issues that inevitably arise (i.e., being proactive)
* Classroom norms
	+ Discussions—creating a supportive and critical space for difficult and complex issues
	+ Accountability
	+ Creating space for and talking about race, ethnicity, gender
	+ Language

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

**Course Policy Statements:**

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.

Attendance: 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. 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).

You are allowed one unexcused absences during our course without penalty. More than one unexcused absence may impact your final course grade. If you must be absent, please contact or visit with me before your anticipated absence.

Tardies: Make every effort to be on time for class. Coming in late, not matter how quite you try to be, can create a disruption.

Make-Up Policy: If you are absent, you are still responsible for turning in work that is 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.

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

Late Work. See collaboratively designed grading policies above.

University Rules: I abide by all university rules, including those concerning academic honesty and harassment/discrimination (see below for additional details).

Academic Honesty Policy: All portions of the Auburn University student academic honesty code (Title XII) found in the *Tiger Cub* will apply to university courses. All academic honesty violations or alleged violations of the SGA Code of Laws will be reported to the Office of the Provost, which will then refer the case to the Academic Honesty Committee.

Disability Accommodations: Students who need special accommodations in class, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act, should arrange for a confidential meeting with the instructor during office hours in the first week of classes (or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately). The student must bring a copy of their Accommodations Letter and an Instructor Verification Form to the meeting. If the student does not have these forms, they should make an appointment with the Program for Students with Disabilities, 1288 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).

Course contingency: If normal class and/or lab activities are disrupted due to illness, emergency, or crisis situation, the syllabus and other course plans and assignments may be modified to allow completion of the course. If this occurs, and addendum to your syllabus and/or course assignments will replace the original materials. Additionally, I will make every effort to send you an email message ahead of time.

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

**Course Requirements**

Attendance and Participation

Clinical Experience and Assignment

Discussion Leadership

Response Paper 1

Response Paper 2

Final Project

ELA Program Common Book Discussion

**Assignments and Projects**

**Attendance and Participation**

Class participation is a vital part of the course and consists of

* careful reading of assignment texts (including bringing those texts with you to class);
* expressing your questions, insights, and criticism of readings and emerging issues;
* participating in class activities;
* applying course concepts to your present and future teaching situations;
* taking risks in your writing and thinking;
* supporting the thinking of your colleagues through listening, encouragement, and constructive dialogue.

Your participation in class activities (whether face-to-face or on Zoom) and through CANVAS, and other means will help students build knowledge together and explore various aspects of the readings to apply them to their own future teaching and contexts. In order to participate, students must be present (physically and cognitively) and have thoughtfully completed the assigned readings. Ongoing failure to contribute to class activities will result in a lower grade. Failure to attend class will result in a lower grade.

**Clinical Experience and Assignment**

As part of this course, you will complete clinical experience hours. For those of you who are classroom teachers, you will be able to complete the bulk of these in your own classrooms (noting that I’ll ask you to spend some intentional time in your ELA colleagues’ classrooms as well). For those who are not currently teaching, you will be placed with a local teacher (more information to come).

As part of your clinical experience, you will connect your proposed final project with your time in ELA classrooms. See below for more information on the Final Project. We’ll talk in greater detail about the requirements and expectations, and you’ll have opportunities to meet with me to discuss these (before, during, and after you complete you hours).

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.

**Discussion Leadership**

Once during the semester, you will be responsible for facilitating class discussion about the readings for that week. You should design some sort of activity to engage the group in exploring the key concepts, arguments, tensions, and questions raised by the author(s) for the week. While each week will include open-ended discussion time for sharing our responses to the readings, for the week you lead you will need to have a more structured and planned activity (or set of activities) for that week. These should last approximately 45-60 minutes. In preparing, you should review your peers’ Flipgrid posts as a guide.

Prior to our next class meeting, you must submit a 250-500 word reflection about your experiences. What did you learn through the experience? What went well? What would you change? How has this experience influenced your thinking about curriculum, assessment, ELA education, and equity?

During Week 3 of class, you will have the opportunity to sign up for a particular class meeting. If you would like, I am more than happy to meet with you to discuss ideas and provide feedback prior to the class period you lead.

**Response Paper 1**

This initial response paper serves as a culminating assessment for the first portion of our course focusing on our two contextual topics: (1) Justice in Schools and Communities and (2) Race and ELA

Just as our class discussions and activities provide you with immediate, in-process, and informal opportunities to react to our content and to reflect on your learning, the response paper offers an opportunity to reflect more broadly across an entire section of the course so that you can synthesize concepts from other texts and articulate your own perspectives in the scholarly conversation. Thus, your discussion should be grounded in the authors and ideas from the course syllabus, and your paper should foreground your insights.

For this response paper, consider questions such as:

* What is knowledge and what is worth knowing? Who decides this? And why/how?
* What knowledge counts? And what counts as knowledge? Conversely, what doesn’t count as knowledge?
* What is justice? What is justice with regard to schools? Communities?
* What is the purpose of foregrounding issues of race/ism in ELA teaching and learning? And how do we know if we’re effective?
* How can people – educators, students, families, communities and community members, and other stakeholders – determine what students know? And what students can/should know?
* What is the responsibility and place of English education and English teachers in these broader debates about justice and race?

Your response paper should be 2-5 pages (not including any cover page or references) and should the APA style guidelines. It should include citations from Kinloch et al. and Johnson and at least one additional academic source not included on the syllabus.

Due Date: February 23

**Response Paper 2**

The second response paper serves as a culminating assessment for the second portion of our course focusing on Advocacy and Literature Instruction.

Just as our class discussions and activities provide you with immediate, in-process, and informal opportunities to react to our content and to reflect on your learning, the response paper offers an opportunity to reflect more broadly across an entire section of the course so that you can synthesize concepts from other texts and articulate your own perspectives in the scholarly conversation. Thus, your discussion should be grounded in the authors and ideas from the course syllabus, and your paper should foreground your insights.

For this response paper, consider questions such as:

* What is advocacy? And what does it mean to advocate for and on behalf of students, families, communities, etc.?
* What’s at the intersection of pedagogy and advocacy?
* What does it mean to engage students in critical literary analysis?
* What does critical literary analysis have to offer ELA (and teachers and students)?
* What roles can English teachers play in advocating for students (and for other teachers)?
* What might it look like to foster advocacy in our students?
* What shifts in thinking about teachers, teaching, curricula, students, and so forth are necessary to fulfill our promise to students, families, and communities?

Your response paper should be 2-5 pages (not including any cover page or references) and should the APA style guidelines. It should include citations from Fleischer & Garcia and Appleman and at least one additional academic source not included on the syllabus.

Due Date: April 13

**Final Project**

Each of you will be completing an individual project that will serve as the culminating assessment for the course. For everyone, this will involve researching a specific subtopic under the broader umbrella of teaching and curriculum in ELA education. This project must involve finding, reading, and analyzing scholarship on these topics, but it might move beyond this too (e.g., doing an action research project or teacher inquiry project, instructional design work, and so forth). The topic, nature of the project, and the end product will be negotiated in collaboration with me.

For masters students, I encourage you to focus on producing artifacts for your own classroom (such as a unit plan) and authoring a reflection describing how you synthesized and applied research to inform your work. For doctoral students, focus on producing a written product that you might submit for a conference presentation or a manuscript suitable for a journal in your field (e.g., *The ALAN Review*, *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, *English Journal*, *Voices from the Middle*, etc.).

You will need to put together a one-page proposal for your project to submit to me by Wed. March 16. The proposal should discuss the following:

* Your topic
* The project that you will complete
	+ Explain what you will do—for example, for a traditional research project, you should be specific about the extent and parameters such as what books you might read or the number of sources you’ll seek
* The final product that you will produce
	+ Describe it in general, but also name the details such as the length of the paper, the number of sources you’ll use and from what publication outlets
* Timeline for completing the project, including benchmarks for your work for the two “final project update” assignments
* Why the topic, research, and final product are meaningful for you

Ideally, I would like to meet with each of you individually prior to your proposal submission. We can generate ideas, and I can provide feedback and suggestions. Based on your submitted proposal, we will interact a second time where I’ll give you feedback again, and you can move forward to complete the project.

You will submit two “work-in-progress” update assignments (March 30 and April 6). In each update, you should address the following:

* Discuss what your major learning has been about your topic since the last check in
* Describe any changes in your project (such as your topic or final product) that you see as valuable based on your learning and progress
* Briefly describe the work you have completed since the last check in
* Evaluate your progress with respect to the timeline and revise your initial timeline based on your progress

You should also be prepared to share an update briefly with your peers during our class sessions.

At the end of the semester (currently scheduled for April 20 and 27), you’ll (1) submit your final product to me and (2) present your project to the class (10-15 minutes, including a visual aid such as a PowerPoint and/or handout). This will summarize and give an overview of the final project that you produced.

Note that each small assignment is required for the final product to be submitted. You can NOT skip the proposal and updates and then submit a final product on April 21. The opportunity for feedback and conversation along the way is crucial to deepening your learning through the final project.

**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.

**Grade Distribution:**

A 90% or above

B 80 – 89%

C 70 – 79%

D 60 – 69%

F 59% or below