**Evaluation and Assessment in English Language Arts Education**

**Summer 2022**

**Dr. Mike Cook—Associate Professor of English Education**

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**Course Number:** CTSE 7540

**Course Title:**  Evaluation and Assessment in ELA Education

 **Credit Hours:** 3 semester hours

 **Prerequisites:** Graduate Standing

 **Corequisites:**  None

**Term:** Summer 2022

**Classroom:** Haley 2461

**Zoom Link for Virtual Meetings:** <https://auburn.zoom.us/j/89018885099>

 **Day/Time:** T/TH 9:00-11:15

 **Instructor:** Dr. Mike Cook

 **Office:** Haley 5056

 **Contact Information:** mpc0035@auburn.edu (Office phone: 844-4415)

 **Office Hours:** 11:30-12:30 and by appointment (Phone and Zoom meetings are also an option)

**Texts:**

Blum, S.D. (Ed.). (2020). Ungrading: Why rating students undermines learning (and what to do instead): Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press.

Sackstein, S. (2015). *Hacking assessment: 10 ways to go gradeless in a traditional grades school*. Times 10 Publications. 9780986104916

Wormeli, R. (2018). *Fair isn’t always equal: Assessment and grading in the differentiated classroom* (second edition). Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers. 9781625310170

**Course Description:**

This class will introduce you to theories of assessment and evaluation in ELA education, classroom applications of assessment and evaluation procedures, and the implications assessment holds for justice and equity. You will explore a problem related to assessment and evaluation in a variety of ways (e.g., developing and implementing assessments and assessment plans, independent research and/or teaching projects). This course aims to help you improve as a reader and writer of research related to assessment and as a classroom teacher who practices assessment and evaluation toward anti-oppressive, equity-based, and contextually wise ends.

**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.

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:

* Attendance
* 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 Content and Schedule:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Class Date** | **Readings Due** | **Assignments Due** |
| Tues. May 24**Online (asynchronous)** | Listen to interview with Django Paris: The Look and Feel of Culturally Responsive Instruction (linked on Canvas)—you can also read a PDF of the interview transcript (also on Canvas)Inoue Introduction: Laboring Toward Grading Contracts and the Inner Dikes (pp. 3-20) |  |
| Thurs. May 26**Online (asynchronous)** | Wormeli Ch. 1: Fair to All: The Mind-Set for Differentiated Instruction (pp. 3-10)Wormeli Ch. 2: Principled Assessment and Grading (pp. 11-20) | Complete first week Flipgrid assignment<https://flipgrid.com/07277b8f>  |
| Tues. May 31**Face-to Face** | Wormeli Ch. 3: Mastery (pp. 21-32)Wormeli Ch. 4: Assessment: Begin with the End in Mind (pp. 35-46)Wormeli Ch. 5: Descriptive Feedback and Student Self-Assessment (pp. 47-62) | Sign Up for Discussion Leadership (in class) |
| Thurs. June 2**Face-to-Face**  | Wormeli Ch. 6: Principles of Effective AssessmentWormeli Ch. 9: Rubrics (pp. 111-158) |  |
| Tues. June 7**Face-to-Face**  | Wormeli Ch. 11: The Relative Nature of Grades and Their Definitions (pp. 145-158)Wormeli Ch. 12: Why Do We Grade, and What About Effort, Attendance, and Behavior? (pp. 159-178)Wormeli Ch. 13: Honor Roll? (pp. 179-184) |  |
| Thurs. June 9**Face-to Face** | Wormeli Ch. 14: It’s Time to Stop Averaging (pp. 185-190)Wormeli Ch. 18: Grading Scales (pp. 241-250)Wormeli Ch. 20: Putting It All Together: How Do Differentiating Teachers Assess and Grade Differently? (pp. 277-282) | Discussion Leadership 1 |
| Tues. June 14**Face-to Face** | Blum Foreword (Alfie Kohn) (pp. xiii-xx)Blum Preface (pp. xxi-xxiii)Blum Introduction: Why Ungrade? Why Grade? (pp. 1-22)Blum Ch. 1: How to Ungrade (Jesse Stommel) (pp. 25-41) | Discussion Leadership 2 |
| Thurs. June 16**Face-to-Face** | Blum Ch. 2: What Going Gradeless Taught Me about Doing the Actual Work (Aaron Blackwelder) (pp. 42-52)Blum Ch. 3: Just One Change (Just Kidding): Ungrading and Its Necessary Accompaniments (Susan Blum) (pp. 53-73) | Response Paper 1: Final Draft DueDiscussion Leadership 3 |
| Tues. June 21 | Blum Ch. 4: Shifting the Grading Mindset (Starr Sackstein) (pp. 74-81)Blum Ch. 5: Grades Stifle Student Learning. Can We Learn to Teach Without Grades? (Arthur Chiaravalli) (pp. 82-88) | Discussion Leadership 4 |
| Thurs. June 23 | **No Class** | **Mini-Semester 1 Exams** |
| Tues. June 28**Face-to-Face** | Blum Ch. 6: Let’s Talk about Grading (Laura Gibbs) (pp. 91-104)Blum Ch. 7: Contract Grading and Peer Review (Christina Katopodis and Cathy Davidson) (pp. 105-122) | Proposals for Final ProjectDiscussion Leadership 5 |
| Thurs. June 30**Face-to-Face**  | Blum Ch. 11: Grade Anarchy in the Philosophy Classroom (Marcus Schultz-Bergin) (pp. 173-187)Inoue Coda: Assessing English So That People Stop Killing Each Other (pp. 305-312) | Discussion Leadership 6 |
| Tues. July 5**Online (asynchronous)** | Introduction: Goodbye, grades; hello, growth (pp. 13-20)Hack 1: Shift in the grades mindset (pp. 21-30)Hack 2: Promote buy-in (pp. 31-42) |  |
| Thurs. July 7**Online (asynchronous)** | Hack 3: rebrand assignments as learning experiences (pp. 43-56)Hack 4: facilitate student partnerships (pp. 57-66)Hack 5: digitize your data (pp. 67-77) |  |
| Tues. July 12**Online (asynchronous)** | Hack 6: maximize time (pp. 78-86)Hack 7: track progress transparently (pp. 87-98)Hack 8: teach reflection (pp. 99-108) |  |
| Thurs. July 14**Online (asynchronous)** | Hack 9: teach students to self-grade (pp. 109-120)Hack 10: cloud-based archives (pp. 121-128)Conclusion: hack your growth (pp. 129-132) |  |
| Tues. July 19**Online (asynchronous)** |  | Response Paper 2: Final Draft Due |
| Thurs. July 21**Online (asynchronous)** |  | Assessment Letter to Students and Families |
| Tues. July 26**Face-to-Face** |  | Final Projects and Presentations |
| Thurs. July 28**Online (asynchronous)** |  |  |
| Exam Week |  |  |

 \*\*Tentative Course Schedule—All readings and assignments are subject to change at the instructor’s discretion. Any changes made to the schedule will be announced in class, via email, and/or through CANVAS.\*\*

**Course Requirements**

Attendance and Participation

Discussion Leadership

Response Paper 1

Response Paper 2

Assessment Letter to Students and Families

Final Project

**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, Flipgrid, 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.

**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 a minimum of 60 minutes.

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 (Tues., May 31), 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 curriculum, pedagogy, equity, and assessment.

Just as our in class discussions 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 pedagogy?
* What is the purpose of teaching? 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?
* What is the responsibility and place of English education and English educators in these broader debates about curriculum and knowledge?

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 Wormeli, and at least one additional academic source not included on the syllabus.

Due Date: Thurs. June 16

**Response Paper 2**

The second response paper serves as a culminating assessment for the second portion of our course focusing on rethinking assessment to ensure relevance, justice, and equity.

Just as our in class discussions 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 assessment and evaluation in the ELA classroom?
* What is equitable and just assessment of learning? And what does that suggest about the current state of affairs in ELA? Stated another way, what roles does assessment play in English education, and what role should it play?
* How do literacy and English language arts relate to curriculum and knowledge?
* What roles can English educators play in supporting students in learning?
* What shifts in thinking about assessment 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 Blum and Sackstein and at least one additional academic source not included on the syllabus.

Due Date: Tues. July 19

**Assessment Letter to Students and Families**

This semester we’ve wrestled with assessment ideologies and with practical considerations of and approaches to assessment in ELA classrooms. We’ve drawn on Paris and Alim’s notions of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy as a way to imagine an education built on equity, justice, and affirmation. We’ve talked about Inoue’s thoughts on language and writing instruction as inequitable and as grounded in whiteness and white supremacy. We’ve also considered assessment, as a concept, in a number of ways, from Wormeli’s discussion of more practical and daily assessment methods to Blum’s and Sackstein’s thoughts on removing grades from teaching and learning. In short, these authors have challenged us to think about not only what we assess and how we assess but also why we assess and in what ways we articulate the answers to those questions to the people most directly and intimately affected by our choices: students and families. As a result, this assignment provides a sort of culminating assessment, one in which you continue (and articulate) your thinking about your stance(s) on and use(s) of assessment in your future classroom.

For this assignment, you will write a letter that outlines your philosophy and practices with respect to assessment and grading that is designed for students and families in secondary ELA education. You might imagine this letter as part of a syllabus you provide to students at the beginning of the school year or as an actual letter you send home to families. In the letter, you must address two major topics.

* First, what is your overall philosophy or stance on assessment and grading? What do you believe as a teacher and why?
* Second, how does your philosophy manifest in what you do with academic work in your classroom? What do you do? How do you do it? And why do you do it in those ways?

Keep the audience in mind here, and ensure that you practice full disclosure and hold yourself accountable. This letter is not a formal academic paper as the first two responses were. Instead, it is designed to be read by secondary students and their families.

Due Date: Thus. July 21

**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 research around the topics of curriculum, knowledge, grading and assessment, and ELA/literacy 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, evaluation and assessment design work, and so forth). The topic, nature of the project, and the end product will be negotiated in collaboration with me. 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 Tues. June 28. 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
* 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.

At the end of the semester (currently scheduled for Tues. July 26), 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.

**Grading Scale:**

89.5-100 = A

79.5-89.4 = B

69.5-79.4 = C

59.5-69.4 = D

000-59.4 = F

**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