NYU Steinhardt  
Department of Teaching and Learning  
LIT C-GE-2017-001  
TEXT, TOOLS, AND CULTURE

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Course Summary: Using a wide range of texts as primary tools in the teaching of reading comprehension from multiple perspectives. Strategies for locating, selecting, and evaluating resources and materials for use in classroom literacy programs, and identifying texts that appeal to reluctant readers and students with special needs. Hypertexts, new literacies and multicultural literature are also emphasized.

Course Objectives

1. Examine texts from multiple perspectives  
2. Understand how and why to use different texts.  
3. Determine how texts relate to the Common Core  
4. Develop a better understanding of the genre features of text.

Course Format

This course uses an innovative format to examine the role of text in the teaching of reading. It is based on four modules, designed to help you understand different aspects of text: text features, narrative, disciplinary text, and digital text. Students will have an opportunity to interact with experts in the field of text in lively discussions and lectures.

Readings

Readings for the course are provided in dated folders under Resources on the NYU CLASSES site for Text, Tools and Culture.

Course Requirements

1. Class participation. Active class participation is a core component of the course. Participation includes the following:  
   a. On-going critical analysis of assigned readings prior to associated course meeting and active participation in class discussions. Policy regarding missed classes: Attendance and active participation in class discussions is assumed and is a significant portion of the course grade. However, students do occasionally
have legitimate reasons for missing a class. Whenever possible, students should inform me in advance of any anticipated absence. In order to assure that students have read and reflected on the readings for a missed class, I require that you submit to me via email no later than 3 days following a missed class a set of brief informal reflections on the required readings. More than 2 class absences will lower your grade incrementally.

Course Accommodations

NYU abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which mandates reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability and may require some type of accommodation for instructional delivery or course requirements, please contact me early in the semester so that I can provide or facilitate in providing accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities. I look forward to talking with you soon to learn how I may be helpful in enhancing your academic success in this course.

Grading

The instructor will grade each module of the course independently. Professor Neuman will be responsible for the final grade. Incompletes are not acceptable. Due dates are firm.

SCHEDULE FOR TOPICS AND REQUIRED READINGS

SECTION I: THE IMPORTANCE OF TEXT AND ITS MANY FEATURES

In this unit, we will explore different types of text, and what it means to analyze text from a critical perspective.

Week 1 (9/3): Course Overview; Introductions
In this first class meeting, we will learn about each other’s backgrounds, explore participants’ goals for the course, and discuss the course structure and requirements. In addition, we will discuss the definition of text and examine the range of text types

Week 2 (9/10): NO CLASS

Readings:


Strachan, S. (2014). Expanding the range of text types used in the primary grades.

Leland, Ocipeka & Kuonen, K. (2012). Reading from a different interpretive stances: In search of a critical perspective.


Author unknown, The Four Resource Model
Assignment Due: For each assigned reading, please write 2-4 “take away” ideas (using references to the text) and bring them to class. During class discussion of the readings, you may make notes on their “take away” ideas before handing them in at the end of class. I will quickly review how students are processing the readings and discussions; however, they will not be graded. Failure to submit “take away” assignment will adversely affect the participation grade.

Week 3: (9/17) Leveled Text and Decodable Text [Guest Instructor: Kay Stahl]
This week, we begin a three-week ‘tour’ of the three major theoretical perspectives within which scholars conceptualize literacy processes and practices: the so-called cognitive, sociocultural, and critical perspectives. The focus this week is on the cognitive perspective.

Reading: Mesmer, H. Textual scaffolds for beginning readers

Week 4 (9/24): Addressing the Challenge of Complex Texts
This week, we will discuss the critical perspective in examining text, and focus on the Common Core and its implications regarding text.

Module 2: Understanding Narrative Text [Instructor: Kendra Tyson]
In this module, we explore the features of narrative, and ways in which teachers can use it to enhance children’s interest and engagement in literacy.

Guiding Question: How can I use the narrative genre in ways to support reading?

Week 5 (10/1): Exploring Text Types

Readings:


Week 6 (10/8): Exploring the Narrative Genre

We will explore how teachers can use narrative in multiple ways.

Readings:


Week 7 (10/15). Narrative and the Common Core

The Common Core has ramifications for the uses of narrative and teaching. We will explore this issue and what it means for instruction.

Readings:


Assignment Due: Choose a book around which to construct a close reading, then write out a well thought out series of questions and prompts--essentially, show me a lesson plan for a close reading.

MODULE III: DISCIPLINARY LITERACY AND TEXT TYPES [INSTRUCTOR: KENNY LOGAN]

In this module, we will describe disciplinary literacy and its relation to different text types. We will also focus on practical approaches to teaching disciplinary literacy.

Week 8 (10/22): The Purposes and Uses of Information Text
Guiding Question: Why is it important to understand the purpose or use of a text?

Readings:


* Chapter 1 only

Week 9 (10/29): Understanding the Challenges and Opportunities of Disciplinary Literacy?

Guiding Question: What challenges do teachers face in teaching disciplinary literacy?


Week 10 (11/5): Practical Approaches to Teaching Disciplinary Literacy

Guiding Question: What are some practical approaches to teaching disciplinary literacy?


* Chapter 4 only


* Chapter 12 only


DUE: A 5-page paper that compares and contrasts two expository classroom texts. Students will discuss the purpose for reading those texts, identify text features that might challenge students, and suggest strategies for helping students to navigate those challenges.

UNIT 4: NEW TEXTS AND NEW LITERACIES (Instructor: Michael Cirelli)

Week 11: (11/12): Critical Literacy, Language, Power & Privilege

Exercise: Personal Statement

Reading due:
Passing the Buck and Missing the Point (Tim Wise)
Rose That Grew From Concrete (David Kirkland)

Response Paper due:
Please write a 2-3 page response that has (3) citations referencing Wise/Kirkland readings in response to the following quote:

They would chop me up into little fragments and tag each piece with a label. You say my name is ambivalence? Think of me as . . . a many armed and legged body with one foot on brown soil, one on white, one in straight society, one in gay world, another in the working class, the socialist, and the occult worlds. Who, me confused? Ambivalent? Not so. Only your labels split me.
(5 points)

WEEK 12 (11/19) Dead Ass: Hip-Hop Education, 50 Cent & the Olive Garden

3x3x3 Overviews
Rap Reports

Reading due:
Critical Hip Hop Language (H. Samy Alim)
Promoting Academic Literacy (Morrell and Andrade)
Response Paper due: Write a Lesson Plan that incorporates hip-hop
(5 points)

WEEK 13 (11/26): Future Texts: Online Literacies, Language and Culture

Rap Reports (Pick 1 of these songs; and present in 3x3x3 format):
Homeboy Sandman “Illuminati” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EsNfgRrtzos
Jean Grae “Kill Screen” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzK-fn9NaCE
Ab Soul featuring Danny Brown “Terrorist Threats”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_71q5lVEjc
Mos Def featuring Talib Kweli “History”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_Z8X_bgEpw
(5 points)

WEEK 14 (12/3) Final Paper due & presentations:

Write a 3-5 page paper that explores the multiple, critical, cultural and creative literacy/literacies in the Earl Sweatshirt song “Chum”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCbWLSZrZfw

(10 points)