

E23.2147 Literacy and Social Studies

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Location: Bobst Library, LL 150

Time: Tuesdays, 4:55 – 6:35

Office hours: by appointment

Course Description:

Fears of a “literacy crisis” have generated increased pressure on the part of schools to integrate reading and writing skills into the content areas. At the same time, research indicates that the acquisition of general literacy skills is connected to disciplinary thinking methods in social studies. Furthermore, discipline-specific literacies have become a larger part of the New York State assessments of social studies competency are now essential for meeting state standards in social studies.

This class will prepare pre-service or in-service teachers to assist students in the acquisition of discipline-specific literacy skills including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In this class we will theorize, design, and critically evaluate a set of techniques for approaching historical documents, social science essay writing, and history textbooks with high school students. Students will use theoretical readings and hands-on activities to explore the genre of social studies writing, including: document analysis and annotation, class notes, thematic essays, and document based questions.

Learning Objectives:

Students will...

- critically examine the epistemological assumptions that guide the construction of historical understanding and historical literacy.
- draw connections between the literacy practices in the social studies and those of other disciplines.
- apply understandings of disciplinary literacy practices to the social studies curriculum and specific teaching and learning contexts.
- develop a knowledge base for how to assess and address the developmental and literacy needs of adolescent learners in social studies.

Required Readings:

There are no texts to purchase for this class. Weekly readings will be posted to Blackboard.

Evaluation and Grading:

Weekly assignments	60 %
Literacy and social studies lesson plan	30 %
Attendance and class participation	10 %

Requirements:

Weekly assignments (60% of grade).

In addition to each week's readings, students will complete assignments to be handed in during class. Usually, these assignments will include responses to the week's readings, hands-on activities which we will discuss in class, or formative work on class projects. Assignments will be graded holistically, based on timely completion as well as depth and precision of work. As these assignments will be the focus of each week's class work, late assignments will NOT be accepted. *Please bring a hard copy of each week's assignment to class – do NOT send me assignments via email.*

***A note on weekly reading:** While the readings are meant to provide background for the week's assignments, they are also important in their own right. Every class is focused on a different essential question, which the week's readings should help answer. Students should use the readings to prepare an answer to the essential question (or at least topics for discussion) each week. These annotations, underlinings, or other notes will not be collected, but will be used during class.

Literacy and social studies curriculum project (30% of grade). Due Tuesday 5/10 via email.

Students will create an extended lesson or mini-unit (roughly 5 days) incorporating explicit literacy skills instruction into a social studies class. This project should demonstrate an understanding of the essential aspects of disciplinary literacy and its connection to course content and appropriate pedagogical techniques. It should also apply knowledge of effective lesson planning as well as goal-setting and planning. You can use any lesson-plan format that works for you, but this project must include the following:

- 1. Context description.** Provide a short (one paragraph) description of a specific teaching context (course, level of students, thematic or chronological/topical context) in which you might implement this unit.
- 2. Unit objectives.** You should comprise 1-3 overarching objectives (as a result of this lesson, what do I want students learn/be able to do?), with constituent knowledge and or skills required for each. These should be linked to course content as well as target specific literacy skills.
- 3. Lesson activities.** Be sure to include a general description of the materials, strategies and amount of time each activity will take. Your unit should be designed in relation to unit objectives, not classroom time. As a result, the descriptions of class activities can be brief, with most attention being given to specific literacy activities and formative assessment of literacy skills. Of course, in the case of each activity, the connection to the unit objectives should be clear.
- 4. Lesson documents.** Create at least three (3) documents to be used in support of your learning objectives or lesson activities. These could include edited primary sources or other readings, handouts, visual organizers, assessments, homework assignments, or skills scaffolding aids. These resources should be "classroom-ready" (i.e. ready to be copied for and used by students).
- 5. Evaluation/Rationale.** Provide a description (1-2 page) of the rationale for this lesson and how/what this lesson will teach students about both social studies content and literacy skills. Also explain how this lesson embodies the principles of good skills development and will provide to the teacher diagnostic information about the skill development of students.

Attendance and class participation (10% of grade).

Students are expected to attend class, participate in class activities and discussions, and turn in work on time. Students are also expected to regularly communicate with me in class or via email about their curriculum project.

Other Information:

Freedom of Expression. Students are reminded that free expression in an academic community is essential to the mission of providing the highest caliber of education possible. New York University encourages civil discourse, reasoned thought, sustained discussion, and constructive engagement without degrading, abusing, harassing or silencing others. I am committed to maintaining an environment of open doors, open hearts, and open minds.

Academic Integrity. Each student in this course is expected to abide by the New York University code of academic integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. All source material must be clearly and accurately cited according to disciplinary guidelines.

Accommodations. All students will be fully included in this course, including those with disabilities. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations to enable you to participate. Any student requiring accommodations due to a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility and/or learning disability or is deaf or hard of hearing, should register with the Moses Center at 212.998.4980 or www.nyu.edu/csd.

Class Schedule, Readings, and Assignments

Date	Class topic	Readings for class/Big Ideas	Weekly Assignment Due
1/25	Intros, Syllabus, Intro activities	None	None
2/1	Disciplinary Literacy: What is it?	1. Shanahan & Shanahan (2008) 2. Monte-Sano (2008) <i>What constitutes disciplinary literacy in social studies? What does it look like in a social studies classroom?</i>	Write a 1-2 page paper in which you define what it means to be “literate” in a social studies setting. What kinds of skills and activities (be specific) are necessary for “higher-level” thinking and learning in social studies? What should students be able to do as a result of their social studies education? NB: Focus on skills and thinking processes, not course content
2/8	The Theory: Cognitive Apprenticeship and Visible Thinking	1. Collins, Brown, & Newman (1989) 2. Project Zero’s “Visible Thinking Project” website OPTIONAL: Ritchhart, Palmer, Church, & Tishman (2006) <i>What is the best way to promote disciplinary literacy in social studies? How do we know students are developing the skills we want them to?</i>	Take a tour of Project Zero’s “Visible Thinking” website. Examine the various mini-lessons and teaching strategies for promoting “visible thinking”. Using one or more of these examples as a template (or by creating your own), and using the social studies content of your choice, develop your own mini-activity to make thinking visible in social studies. Give a detailed description of the activity or create a handout that students might use. Write a brief (1-2 paragraph) explanation of what skill(s) this activity is promoting and how this activity makes the thinking of students “visible”.
2/15	Social Science Argumentation	1. Felton & Herko (2004) 2. Sipress (2004) <i>What skills are required to make an effective social science argument? How might these be taught to students?</i>	Read the two sample social science arguments posted on Blackboard (labeled “Jerry” and “George”). These arguments were written in response to the following prompt: <i>Evaluate the extent to which the U.N. has been successful at achieving its stated goals.</i> For both Jerry’s and George’s arguments, complete the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Write comments on the paper as if you were grading it and handing it back to the student. You don’t need to give it a score. Write a paragraph describing the strengths and weaknesses of the student’s argument writing. Be specific! Write a paragraph describing what you would do as a teacher to improve this student’s writing. What activities, skills practice, or direct instruction would you recommend for this student?
2/22	NO CLASS – Contemplate the impact of your favorite President		
3/1	“Sourcing” Primary Sources	1. Wineburg (1991) 2. Young & Leinhardt (1998) <i>What does it mean to “analyze” primary sources? What is the difference between simplistic and sophisticated historical analysis?</i>	Read the following accounts of “Beavis’s Big Game”. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in the accompanying chart for each “source.” Keep in mind the bias of each testimony and why each person might be biased. Using the eyewitness accounts and witness statements below, you must reconstruct in a paragraph the story of what happened for yourself. Remember: this story must be believable (for those that weren’t there) and accurate (for those that were there). Decide for yourself what happened at the game, and what kind of story you will tell. The story should take into account as many of the source as you possibly can.

Date	Class topic	Readings for class/Big Ideas	Weekly Assignment Due
3/8	Teaching with Primary Sources	Wineburg & Martin (2009) <i>How can primary sources be made accessible to students?</i>	1. Find a primary source of your choice (see Blackboard for websites if you need help finding one). "Tamper" with the source (i.e. edit, excerpt, annotate, add scaffolds) in a way that will make it more readable and useful for students. Turn in both the original source and your "tampered" version. 2. Write a short paper (1-2 page) in which you discuss the challenges this source in its original form provides for students and how your "tampering" helps to mitigate these challenges. Also comment on how you would use this "edited" source with students.
3/15 NO CLASS – NYU Spring Break			
3/22	Reading	1. Daniels & Zemelman (2004), Ch. 2 2. Hennings (1993) <i>What skills, habits, and kinds of thinking are necessary for students to read for understanding in social studies? How can these be developed in students?</i>	Due 3/29 in class. Read Ch. 13 ("The Spread of Civilizations in East Asia") from <i>World History: Connections to Today</i> , a popular 9 th grade Global History textbook (posted on Blackboard). Imagine you are a teacher who is required to assign this section as part of your global history class. Complete and turn in the Textbook Analysis Activity (posted on Blackboard).
3/29	Textbooks	1. Paxton (1999) 2. Daniels & Zemelman (2004), Ch. 6 OPTIONAL: Loewen (1995), Intro and chs. 11-12 <i>Why are textbooks challenging for students? What can we do about it?</i>	
4/5	Writing as a process	1. Flower (1981/1993), Ch. 8, pp.171-187 2. Gere, Christenbury, & Sassi (2005), Ch. 2, pp. 31-49 OPTIONAL: Conley (2008), Ch. 11 <i>How is writing in social studies a cognitive process for students? Can the writing process be taught?</i>	Send me via email your work so far on your curriculum project. What skills are you focusing on? What content are you going to use? What textbooks, literature, or primary sources are students going to use? What literacy-focused activities or assignments are you going to use? I don't expect a finished product, but I would like to know what you are thinking and provide you with feedback. At this point, your project should be a work in progress.
4/12	Rubrics	1. Gere, Christenbury, & Sassi (2005), Ch. 8 2. De La Paz (2009) 3. View rubrics examples on Blackboard <i>What makes a good rubric? How can rubrics be teaching tools?</i>	1. Using the readings and sample rubrics as a guide, create a rubric for use in grading essays on the following prompt: <i>Discuss the reasons for the challenges currently facing sub-Saharan Africa.</i> 2. Read the three sample essays provided (labeled "Dexter" and "Rita" and "Harry") and grade them using the rubric you've created.
4/19	Regents/Essay writing	OPTIONAL: Blackey (1981) OPTIONAL: Blackey (1989) <i>What does it take for students to be successful on Regents essay exams? How can students be prepared for these exams, skills-wise?</i>	1. Complete the thematic essay section (Part II) of the June 2010 Global History Regents Exam. You do NOT need to write a full essay – simply plan/outline what you would write. 2. After planning your own essay, and using the scoring rubric provided, read and grade the four sample essays ("Hurley", "Sawyer", "Jack", and "Kate") posted on Blackboard. For each essay, give the paper a score (0-5) and then write a paragraph explaining your reasoning (be specific and refer to the rubric).

Date	Class topic	Readings for class/Big Ideas	Weekly Assignment Due
4/26	Regents/Multiple Choice and DBQ	No reading due <i>What does it take for students to be successful on multiple choice and DBQ assessments? What can be done to help prepare students for these challenges?</i>	Complete the multiple choice and DBQ sections (Part I and Part III) of the June 2010 U.S. History and Government Regents Exam. You do NOT need to write an essay for the DBQ section, simply plan/outline what you would write. Check your answers to the multiple choice – only AFTER testing yourself! Also feel free to peruse the DBQ scoring guide. Bring all these documents to class!
5/3	Metacognition and Self-Assessment Last class Surveys, loose ends	No reading due <i>How can students take charge of their own literacy skills development?</i>	
5/10	Possible Make-up class???	Literacy and Social Studies Curriculum Project due <u>via email</u> Tuesday 5/10.	

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