

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA GREENSBORO**  
**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**  
**CUI 530 Methods of Teaching Language Arts in Middle Grades**  
**Spring 2006**

**Time/Day:** Tuesday-Thursday, 3:30-4:45 p.m. at Kiser Middle School

**Credits:** 3

**Instructor:** Dr. Kathy Smith-McIlwain  
kmcilwain@triad.rr.com  
577-7725 (voice mail)

**Office Hours:** By appointment and as posted at 110B Curry Building (basement)

**Required Texts:**

Moffett, J. & Wagner, J.W. (1992) *Student-Centered Language Arts, K12*.  
Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Ashton-Warner, Sylvia. (1986) *Teacher*. New York: Touchstone, Simon & Schuster.

**Course Description** Course develops competencies in middle grades language arts instruction as related to adolescent learners. Emphases include practical and theoretical attention to best-practices, curriculum, assessment, and standards of practice.

**Major questions to be addressed in the course:**

- 1) How are language arts competencies developed in a developmentally appropriate middle school environment?
- 2) How are language arts competencies developed in a culturally diverse classroom?
- 3) What is the role of teacher-student relationship in developing language arts curriculum?
- 4) What are the meaningful, purposeful, and relevant goals of language arts instruction in middle grades?
- 5) How are language arts competencies developed across ability levels?
- 6) How is instruction in reading and writing integrated to increase performance in both?

**Course Goals:**

- 1) Students will experience and develop age-appropriate practices for language arts instruction in middle grades.
- 2) Students will develop an awareness of the need for sensitivity and response to diversity in language arts instruction.
- 3) Students will recognize the significance of student-teacher relationship in designing language arts instruction.
- 4) Students will gain experience in designing creative, original, language arts activities and evaluations in response to individual student needs.
- 5) Students will question, reflect upon, compare-contrast, and critique conventional, current, and research-based trends in language arts instruction.

- 6) Students will develop an awareness of the use of evaluation and assessment for diagnostic purposes.
- 7) Students will practice and design an integrated approach to instruction in reading and writing.

### **Attendance, Grading, Policies and Procedures**

1) **Class attendance is mandatory.** Absences will affect your final grade according to the following policy adopted by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction: two absences will result in the lowering of your final grade by one full letter grade, four or more absences will result in a failing grade, three tardies (either coming late or leaving early) will be recorded as one absence. Please be prepared for every class, that is, come to class on time, having completed and reflected on all readings and other assignments. Please monitor your participation in our class, that is, participating actively but not dominating discussion.

2) Assignments must be turned in on time. Late assignments will not be accepted for grading. Anticipate absences and arrange to turn in assignments before the deadline or electronically.

3) **Grades are final.** Students are always welcome to submit written work for suggestions before the deadline. The best way to do this is by email attachment. I will try to honor a 24-hour turn-around on all written work submitted for suggestions before the deadline. **Students will not be allowed to re-write or re-submit any assignment except by the rough draft procedure outlined here.** Students may not submit work for suggestions within 48 hours of the deadline. All written work must be typed in black ink, 12-point font, and double-spaced. Work will not be accepted on disk.

4) Cell phones must be turned off during instructional time.

#### **Grading:**

**A= 95-100**

**A-=90-94**

**B+=87-89**

**B=83-86**

**B-=80-82**

**C+=77-79**

**C=73-76**

**C-=70-72**

### **Assignments and Projects**

- 1) **Course Project Portfolio:** Students will participate in a Writers Workshop throughout the semester in order to produce individual portfolios that will be somewhat autobiographical. The portfolio will include three major parts: 1) an autobiographical account of your early childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood, highlighting the people and experiences that have led you to become the person you are and to develop an interest in teaching, 2) a reflection/response to Sylvia Ashton-Warner's *Teacher*, that will synthesize the methods, philosophies, and major foci of the book with your experience and emerging philosophy of education; 3) a collection of 7-10 "authentic discourses" presented

- in Part III of Moffett and Wagner; 4) a fictional memoir or fictional autobiography based on part 1) of the project, 5) a reflection of the significance of relationships in the Writers Workshop and Book Club processes of writing and reading instruction. Class time will be provided in the form of Book Clubs and Writers Workshops to develop the portfolio and to improve students' writing skills. Participation in the Writers Workshops and improved individual writing performance as evidenced by the drafting process will be considered in the final grade for the project.
- 2) Write a **6-point lesson plan** to teach one of the discourses described in part 3) of the Course Project. Teach it to a group of students and reflect in writing on its success and suggest areas for improvement. Also, arrange to have a peer and your OSTE/Team Leader observe your lesson and offer feedback.
  - 3) Develop two **book lists** (a character list and an author list) for use in a diverse classroom. Each list will contain 10 titles, authors, and 1-2 sentence summaries of the books' contents. The **first list** will suggest books in which a central character is African-American male, African-American female, Latino, Latina, and six others reflecting the diversity in your individual classrooms or schools. Remember that diversity includes ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical challenges, ability level, religion, and native language. The **second list** will suggest books whose authors reflect the diversity of the first list. The author list should suggest books in poetry, drama, biography, autobiography, fiction, history/journalism and four others of your choosing. The lists should be developed to **address all ability levels** evident in your classroom. Consider the use of sophisticated picture books!
  - 4) Develop a **background-builder list** to enhance student understanding of some area of the curriculum or unit of study. This should be an actual unit taught in your classroom or grade level. Suggest titles or examples from the following: fiction, biography/autobiography, picture books, journalism, film, music, maps, drama.
  - 5) This assignment dovetails with 4) above. Identify a **disengaged reader/writer** and develop a relationship with the student. Conduct an abbreviated miscue analysis (to be discussed in class) to discover the nature of the student's difficulty. Use your lists to build the student's background knowledge. If they are identified as learning disabled, observe the extra help they receive and critique it. Spend at least 3 hours working individually with the student. Write a first impression describing why you chose this student, a diagnosis following the miscue analysis, and reflection of the results of your background-building and relationship.

### **Point Distribution**

Course Project Portfolio (35 points)  
6-Point Lesson Plan (20 points)  
Author and Character Lists (20 points)  
Background-Builder List (10 points)  
Disengaged Reader/Writer (15 points)  
TOTAL = 100 points

## Course Calendar

**T Jan. 10:** syllabus review, introductions  
**Th Jan. 12:** orientation to Moffett pp. 1-2, chapter 1, pp. 4-19  
**T Jan. 17:** chapter 2, pp. 20-47, handout  
**Th Jan. 19:** Harvey & Goudvis chapters 1-2  
**T Jan. 24:** chapter 7, pp. 139-176  
**Th Jan. 26:** Book Clubs begin, background information research assigned  
**T Jan 31:** chapter 9, pp. 197-239, Book Clubs meet  
**Th Feb. 2:** chapter 10, pp. 240-262, Course Project Writers Workshops begin  
**T Feb. 7:** Moffett pp. 263-264, chapters 14-15, pp. 308-353, Book Clubs  
**Th Feb 9:** Writers Workshop  
**T Feb 14:** chapters 16-17, pp. 354-393, Book Clubs  
**Th Feb16:** Writers Workshop  
**T Feb 21:** chapter 18, pp. 394-428, Book Clubs  
**Th Feb 23:** Writers Workshop, **Author and Character Lists Due**  
**T Feb 28:** chapter 3, pp. 48-59 & chapter 4, pp. 74-90, Book Clubs  
**Th March 2:** Writers Workshop  
**T March 7:** **spring break ☺**  
**Th March 9:** **spring break ☺**  
**T March 14:** chapters 11, 12, 13, pp. 265-333, Book Clubs, **Background List Due**  
**Th March 16:** Writers Workshop  
**T March 21:** chapter 5, pp. 91-110 & chapter 8, pp. 177-196, Book Clubs  
**Th March 23:** Writers Workshop  
**T March 28:** Book Clubs  
**Th March 30:** Writers Workshop, **6-Point Lesson Due**  
**T April 4** Book Clubs  
**Th April 6** Writers Workshop  
**T April 11** Book Clubs  
**Th April 13** Writers Workshop, **Disengaged Reader/Writer Due**  
**T April 18** Book Clubs  
**Th April 20** Writers Workshop  
**T April 25** Book Clubs  
**Th 27 Course Project Portfolio Due**  
**T May 2**