Course Description

This course will examine contemporary children’s or young adult texts of the students’ choosing, featuring people from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds; and positions on the spectrum of gender and sexuality. We will consider how the inclusion of these texts in middle and high school English Language Arts curricula positively impacts students’ engagement, reading development, and empathy. You will craft lesson plans that empower your students to read and analyze literary texts representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives.
Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- describe historical practice in text selection for the ELA curriculum.
- explain the links between reading and empathy, and the role of literary “mirrors” in students’ self-affirmation.
- evaluate potential literary texts for their ELA curriculum.
- diversify their curriculum by including various text genres, and representing people/characters of various cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations, and positions on the gender spectrum.
- design lesson plans that empower their own students to read and comprehend literary texts representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives.

Relevant Standards

Mass. ELA Anchor 6-12 Standards for Reading #10: Independently and proficiently read and comprehend complex literary [and informational] texts.

- Grade 6-12: Independently and proficiently read and comprehend literary texts representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives and exhibiting complexity appropriate for at least grade [6-12].

Common Core State Standards for Reading #10: Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Course Expectations

The course is a collaborative four week online learning experience for teachers. You will explore diverse contemporary children’s or young adult texts with the goal of creating engaging lessons and teaching materials that will empower your students to become lifelong readers. Though this course is aimed primarily at teachers of grades 6-12 ELA (English Language Arts), the content will be relevant - with modification - to younger students or to students of Social Studies, Arts, and Humanities disciplines. The tone of the course will be collegial and collaborative, and you will share the results of your work with your classmates to help one another generate ideas for curriculum, lessons, teaching materials and advocacy.

All course material is posted on the course Blackboard site. Students should expect to spend time each week reading articles, participating in the discussion threads, and posting assignments to the class collaboration space. There are no synchronous meetings or webinars for this course. According to the FSU Continuing Professional Education Department, “1 Graduate Credit = 15 contact hours (50 minute classroom hours) plus 2 hours of out of class work for every hour in class = 30 hours of out of class work.” Therefore, students in a 1 credit graduate course should expect about 45 hours of work in total.
over the 4 week course. Late work will be accepted up to 2 days at a reduction of 20% credit per day late. If there are extenuating circumstances, those will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

Course Materials

The required readings in this course are academic articles posted in .pdf format on the course BlackBoard site. The full list is included in this syllabus. No outside research or specific book purchases are required for this course, though students will get many book recommendations, from the instructor and their fellow students, of children’s and YA books that they may want to read and ultimately include in their curriculum. Two assignments ask students to analyze a literary text of their choice. Students may choose any text that fits the aims of this course, though it is recommended that they use a text that they aim to teach to their own students, so that they may use the assignments as a way of developing potential teaching materials.

Course Content and Outline

Week 1:

Video Lessons:

- The Literary Canon in 20th c. ELA classes
- Reading and Empathy in Adolescent Development

Required Readings:

- Connors, Sean. “Confronting the Monster under the (Text Complexity) Staircase.” (6 pages)
- Herz, Sarah. “Direct v. Exploring.” From Hinton to Hamlet: Building Bridges between Young Adult Literature and the Classics. (7 pages)

AND

Choose 1 of the following 2 articles:

- Gallo, Donald. “How Classics Create an Aliterate Society.” (7 pages)
- Wright, Katherine Landau, and Matthew Thomas. “Who Cares About The Grapes of Wrath?: Arguments for Balancing Choice and Classical Literature” (5 pages)

Week 2:

Video Lessons:

- How Do We Select New Texts?
- Tools for Text Selection

Required Readings:

- Myers, Walter Dean. “Where are the People of Color in Children’s Books?” (2 pages)

AND
Choose 1 of the following 2 articles:

- Grice, Karly et al. “Connecting across Borders by Reading without Walls: Using Non-Prose Narratives to Multiply Multicultural Class Content.” (5 pages)
- Kedley, “Using LGBTQ Graphic Novels to Dispel Myths about Gender/Sexuality.” (6 pages)

**Week 3:**

**Video Lesson:**
- *Classroom Practice - whole class, book clubs, and independent reading*

**Required Readings:**
Choose 2 of the following 3 articles
- Knickerbocker, Joan L. and James Rycik. “Growing into literature: Adolescents’ literary interpretation and appreciation.” (12 pages)
- Thein, Amanda Haertling and Mark Sulzer. “Illuminating Discourses of Youth through the Study of First-Person Narration in YA Literature.” (7 pages)

AND

- Self-chosen text for your final project

**Week 4:**

**Video Lesson:**
- *Creating Lifelong Readers*

**Required Readings:**
Choose 1 of the following 2 videos
- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. “The Danger of a Single Story.” TED. (Video, 18 minutes)
- Zaki, Jamil O. “Building Empathy: How to Hack Empathy and Get Others to Care More.” TEDx - Marin. (Video, 13 minutes)

AND

- Self-chosen text for your final project
**Grading Criteria and Methods of Evaluation**

Detailed instructions and a grading rubric for each assignment will be available on BlackBoard at the beginning of the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion posts</td>
<td>Contribute to at least 3 of the weekly discussion threads. Each post must include a cited quotation and/or paraphrase from one of the week’s readings, your own thinking on the topic, and a reference to a previous post in the thread, if you are not the first to post. In this first week, please make 1 of your 3 posts to the “Introduce Yourself” thread. For this thread, there’s no need to quote from the readings.</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Friday, Oct. 9th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment: Journal</td>
<td>Write a ~1-2 page journal response in which you answer the following questions about one class that you teach: At what developmental stage as readers do you think the majority of your students are in this class? (Or are they all over the map?) Do you think your students like to read? Who/what entity determines this course’s curriculum? What texts currently make up the course’s curriculum? What types of characters and cultures are represented in these texts? Run the numbers - what percentage of texts are male v. female-authored? Featuring characters of color? Featuring characters who identify as LGBTQ+? Are there ample “mirrors,” “windows,” and “sliding glass doors” for your students in this curriculum? If not, where do you think there are gaps?</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sunday Oct. 11th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion posts</td>
<td>Contribute to at least 2 of the weekly discussion threads. See description in Week #1.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Friday Oct. 16th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment: none!</td>
<td>No assignment due this week. Take this week to explore a diverse range of texts that you might consider teaching, and then choose one to focus on for the assignments in Weeks 3 and 4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion posts</td>
<td>Contribute to at least 2 of the weekly discussion threads. See description in Week #1.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Friday Oct. 23rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment: Letter</td>
<td>Write a (~1 page) letter or memo to a stakeholder in your district, explaining your choice of a new text [real or hypothetical] for your ELA curriculum. Consider as a potential recipient: students, parents, Principal, ELA Department Head, Curriculum Director, School Committee, or a possible funding source for a budget for new materials. Advocate for and promote your choice of the new text, citing at least two scholarly sources regarding the benefits of reading contemporary, diverse texts. No additional research is required - you may cite any of the texts you’ve read thus far in the course. Please consult the rubric for grading information.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Sunday, Oct. 25th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Week 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion posts</th>
<th>Contribute to at least 1 of the weekly discussion threads. See description in Week #1.</th>
<th>2.5</th>
<th>Thursday Oct. 29th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Final Project: Lesson Plans (or alternative project approved by the Instructor)**

| Create two stand-alone lesson plans - on a text of your choice or a thematic grouping of texts aligned with the standards of this course. Include at least one teaching material (ie - slideshow, worksheet, assignment handout, etc.) per lesson. This text could be used for a whole-class text, small group book clubs, or independent reading. One of the lesson plans should focus on students’ personal or cultural reaction to the text, and another should focus on some literary element of the text (ie - plot structure, point of view, figurative language, etc.). These lesson plans and materials should align with the relevant state standards and our course objectives, but it is not necessary that all standards or course objectives are represented. Use whatever lesson format or template that is practical for you. Please consult the rubric for grading information. If you are not a classroom teacher and you’d like to propose an alternative project that would be more relevant to your current role, please do so. | 40 | Friday, Oct. 30th |

**FRAMINGHAM STATE UNIVERSITY GRADING SCALE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECORDED GRADE</th>
<th>EQUIVALENT QUALITY POINTS</th>
<th>TOTAL POINT VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100-95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>94-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>89-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>86-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>82-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>79-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>76-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>72-70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Required Course Readings**


Optional Course Readings (Works Cited in Video Lessons)


FSU Library Access

Whittemore library provides access to numerous online databases for all FSU students and faculty. These databases are used to search for journal or newspaper articles. Many of these articles are available in full-text. All databases accessed from off-campus require you to login before being able to search. To login to the library databases from off-campus, you may use your Blackboard username and password. If you have problems searching the library databases, please contact the Reference Librarians at: tel: 508.626.4654 or e-mail: reference@framingham.edu

FSU Technology Support

Submit help requests online using the ITS self-service portal.

Contact the Technology Resource Center Service Desk by e-mailing it@framingham.edu or by calling 508-215-5906. The Technology Resource Center is located in the Henry Whittemore Library - Lower Mezzanine.

Contact the Education Technology Office by e-mailing eto@framingham.edu or by calling 508-626-4927. The Education Technology Office is located in Hemenway Hall, Rooms 105-109.

FSU Academic Honesty Policy

“Integrity is essential to academic life. Consequently, students who enroll at Framingham State University agree to maintain high standards of academic honesty and scholarly practice. They shall be responsible for familiarizing themselves with the published policies and procedures regarding academic honesty.

Academic honesty requires but is not limited to the following practices: appropriately citing all published and unpublished sources, whether quoted, paraphrased, or otherwise expressed, in all of the student’s oral and written, technical and artistic work; and observing the policies regarding the use of technical facilities.

Infractions of the Policy on Academic Honesty include, but are not limited to:

1. Plagiarism: claiming as one’s own work the published or unpublished literal or paraphrased work of another. It should be recognized that plagiarism is not only academically dishonest but also illegal.
2. Cheating on exams, tests, quizzes, assignments, and papers including the giving or acceptance of these materials and other sources of information without the permission of the instructor(s).
3. Unauthorized collaboration with other individuals in the preparation of course assignments.
4. Submitting without authorization the same assignment for credit in more than one course.”
Please see the FSU Graduate Catalog p. 21-22 for full policy and further information.

Accommodations

“Framingham State University offers equal opportunities to all qualified students, including those with disabilities and impairments. The University is committed to making reasonable accommodations as are necessary to ensure that its programs and activities do not discriminate, or have the effect of discriminating, on the basis of disability. Academic Support serves students with learning and psychiatric disabilities as well as students with visual, mobility and hearing impairments.”

Please see the Disability/Access Services website for more information or contact LaDonna Bridges, Associate Dean of Academic Success, lbridges@framingham.edu.