

# Course Syllabus

Methods of Teaching Language Arts

English 5410 Fall 2014

## Jeff Metcalf

3428 LNCO 581-5052

Course hours: T/Th 12:25-1:45

BEH 116

Email: [jeff.metcalf@english.utah.edu](mailto:jeff.metcalf@english.utah.edu)

**Office hours: T/Th 11:00-noon**

**Conferences: Arranged**

## Introduction

The role of the teacher in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is much more complicated than it has ever been before. Much is asked of us in the lifetime of our career and quite often, it is ourselves who ask the deepest questions. But there is a simple truth about becoming a teacher and it is this: If you are a good teacher, you will touch lives and make a tremendous difference in the shape of our community. The profession of teaching, of being an educator is the last truly noble profession on the planet. It is a decision that should not be made carelessly. Becoming a teacher also includes accepting a silent vow of poverty and humility. The best teachers never forget they are always students. It is a sacred charge.

## **The Teacher in Our Community**

This semester we are going to roll up our sleeves and get to work. The class will be divided into grades 9-12 and will design a full semester using the standard CORE curriculum from the Utah State Board of Education. During the semester each grade will explore, question, argue, challenge and debate contemporary ideas. Our work will be broken up into several distinct phases: involving the exploration of language, literature, multigenre theory, and real applications of the CORE in the working world. We will read, write, teach, observe, share, act, and engage ourselves fully in the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching. Hopefully, the end result of this semester's work will culminate with a very personal sense of connectedness to a community larger and more important than us.

## **Centering as Dialogue**

"Centering: that act which precedes all others on the potter's wheel. The bringing of clay into a spinning, unwobbling pivot, which will then be free to take innumerable shapes as potter and clay press against each other. The firm, tender, sensitive pressure, which yields as much as it, asserts. It is like a handclasp between two living hands, receiving the greeting at the very moment that they give it. It is this speech between the hand and the clay that makes me think of dialogue. And it is a language far more interesting than the spoken vocabulary which tries to describe it, for it is spoken not by the tongue and lips but by the whole body, by the whole person, speaking and

listening. It is the total person who hears. Sometimes the skin seems to be the best listener, as it prickles and thrills, say to a sound or a silence; or the fantasy, the imagination: how it bursts into inner pictures as it listens and then responds by pressing its language, its forms, into the listening clay. To be open to what we hear, to be open to what we say..."

***Centering in Pottery, Poetry and the Person*** by

M.C. Richards

**Course Texts**

**Books available at university bookstore.**

- ***Picturing Texts*** by Lester Faigley, Diana George
- ***Risking Intensity*** by Judith Rowe Michaels
- ***The Art of Freedom*** by Earl Shorris
- ***Moral Tribes*** by Joshua Greene

**Requirements/Projects**

Regular attendance, active reading, class assignments, papers, posted journal entries, posted outside activities and a sense of adventure and playfulness.

Service-learning (20 hrs. during semester). Post 3 responses to the service learning experience on Canvas). This will be posted in Discussions on Canvas. Do the same for the Outside Activities.

Outside activities would include anything that deals with performances connected to the world of English. Fiction/Poetry, Plays, Lectures, Concerts, etc.

## ***Core Presentation***

This is the most important aspect of the class. Toward the end of the semester, class member will have two full periods to present their work to the class. Each student will present one short lesson from their particular discipline to the class highlighting how this fits into the State Core Curricula. The class presentation will be discussed in more detail later in the semester. Class will be organized in such a fashion that our Tuesday class will be a craft lecture with our Thursday class being a research day. Every Thursday, I will meet with the different grades in LNCO 3820.

## **Grading**

Your grade will be based on class participation, attendance, outside postings, journal entries, and the CORE presentation. Attendance is extremely important. If you miss 3 times your grade will be dropped significantly. Participation means exactly what it says: Be involved and offer us your opinions and insights into the class discussions.

Your grade will be determined on the quality of your contribution to the community of the classroom. How you participate, engage in the process, celebrate the challenge, articulate what you have observed and learned during the course of the semester, how you write, think and question all hold equal value in this equation.

All papers should be carefully drafted, revised, edited and proofread.  
Give me your best.

**Plagiarism: Not negotiable in any way. In keeping with the policies of the English Department and the University of Utah, any student caught plagiarizing will fail the course. Make certain to credit all sources properly.**

**\*\*\*Other Stuff\*\*\***

Have fun. Laugh. Commit. Explore. Sing.

- Keep a copy of all your work.
- If you need help, come see me. If you can't come in during my office hours, talk to me and I'll make time for you.
- The ***Day-to-Day*** schedule **will** most probably change during the semester. Be flexible. Bring ideas to the class. The class is all about experimenting, sharing, and trying out new ideas. It is, in many ways, the beginning of a wonderful dance. Share the steps.

Cheers... Jeff Metcalf