EDUC 597: Secondary English for Special Education

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                                 by appointment

Course Description
The EDUC 597: Secondary English for Special Education course is designed to provide currently practicing special education teachers with specialized knowledge of secondary English/language arts content and research-based practices defined by the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs) and the Standards for the English Language Arts as set forth by the National Council of Teachers of English.

EDUC 597 introduces special education teachers to the fundamentals of theory and practice for teaching English/language arts in secondary settings. Class sessions, reading/writing assignments, and application activities emphasize current issues and recent developments in curriculum in the teaching of secondary school English/language arts.

Course Goals
The purpose of EDUC 597 is to prepare special educators who teach English/language arts to understand, respect, and effectively facilitate the language development and learning of the diverse adolescents with whom they work. The course is designed to support teachers as they:

1. develop a personal philosophy of language arts education that is supported by theory and research on the teaching and learning of the language arts,
2. gain a more complete understanding of the expectations for students in a standards-based English/language arts curriculum, and
3. make connections between theory and practice in showing a readiness to teach the standards-based English /language arts curriculum to students in the grade level/setting in which the teacher is licensed.

More specifically, during the EDUC 597 course, students will:

1. read research and theory representative of current thinking in the teaching of English/language arts,
2. explore and integrate specific areas of content in the teaching of the English/language arts,
3. practice planning activities on process-based writing experiences that facilitate students’ understanding of and reflections on their readings, their use of language, and their knowledge of high quality writing,
4. practice planning standards-based lessons that are taught within the context of the language arts,
5. practice planning activities and discussions that involve students in active, reflective responses to literature within a diverse community of learners,
6. analyze teaching practices in light of course readings and discussions, and
7. write a beginning personal theory of English education.

Performance Standards for EDUC 597
This course for preparing special educators in the content area of English/language arts has a set of performance standards that establish expectations for student achievement. By the completion of EDUC 597, students will be able to:

1. describe the national, state, and local standards for English language arts and use them as the underlying basis of classroom curriculum and instruction,
2. design coherent units of instruction and effective daily lessons that reflect current research, theory, and practice in English/language arts,
3. utilize knowledge of adolescence, language, learning, teaching, and diversity to plan and adapt instruction that maximizes learning for all students in today's schools,
4. develop assessments appropriate for identified curricular objectives and related national, state, and local standards,
5. incorporate media/technology into the curriculum to enhance the teaching and learning of English/language arts,
6. reflect upon and critically analyze one's own and observed teaching practices in light of related theory and research in English education, and
7. articulate a developing personal theory of English education.

**Required Course Readings**

**Required Online Access**
- *English Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework* found online via [www.pen.k12.va.us](http://www.pen.k12.va.us)
- Expanded standards information found online via [www.ttaconline.com](http://www.ttaconline.com) (SOL enhancements)
- The FCPS HS English Blackboard Community or the MS English Blackboard. You can find the English POS documents as well as other resources.
- GMU Blackboard Course Website found online via [blackboard.gmu.edu](http://blackboard.gmu.edu)
- GMU’s Blackboard will be used to post important information for this course. You will use it to extend your learning through exposure to resources beyond the text and participate in group discussions. The following is how you will access the Blackboard-GSE Login Page:
  ✓ Enter the URL http://blackboard.gmu.edu into your browser location field.
  ✓ Click on the Login button.
  ✓ Enter your Username & Password assigned to you. Most likely it will be your first initial of your first name and your entire last name (for example - csmith). This will serve as both your username and password (unless you already have an account). Please verify your account information the first night of class then Click Login. Then click on the course title to enter the actual website for this class.

**Optional Course Readings**
Students should be aware that it is possible to obtain a student membership in either the National Council of Teachers of English or the International Reading Association and subscribe to one of the following journals:
- *English Journal*
- *Voices from the Middle*
- *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*
Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation in Class-based Activities. Attendance is critical; class time will provide opportunities for (1) participation in hands-on activities, (2) contribution of effective teaching strategies and content application ideas, and (3) reflection on readings, class activities and assignments, and observations from your past field experiences. (If unavoidable circumstances prevent attendance at a class, please call the instructor in advance; contact a classmate to discuss missed assignments.) As you are also enrolled as Fairfax County Academy participants, be aware that you must meet the overall attendance policy of the staff development office in order to receive credit for this course through that network. Should you have any concerns about your ability to be present for the required contact hours, please notify the instructor immediately.

Students will examine and report on key aspects of English/language arts instruction by exploring combination of theory, research, and practice. Students will also reflect upon current practice and past experience in an effort to apply research to practice in specific situations. Differentiation of instruction will be examined as a tool for meeting the needs of diverse learners in the same settings. Students will examine the content requirements of English/language arts instruction relative to national and state standards by building a “toolbox” of application ideas for use in their specific context. As this course is primarily designed to facilitate the acquisition of a highly qualified status for currently licensed special educators, activities will be designed to apply the content information examined.

Students are expected to be consistently well-prepared to participate in class as active, thoughtful discussants. Good teachers are lifelong learners, open to new developments in both theory and practice. Earning of points will be negatively impacted by both absence and tardiness. Earning of points will also be impacted by the quality of your participation. For example: a) silence any sound emitting devices, b) wait until the instructor/guest speaker has finished prior to gathering your belongings, and c) refrain from sleeping, and d) refrain from talking while others are talking. Evidence of engagement in learning can be shown with preparedness, on-time attendance, effort to complete in-class activities thoroughly, positive non-verbals, respect for others, improvement, and positive self-advocacy. Class discussions will be conducted in a professional, informed fashion wherein disruptive students will be asked to leave the class. Your contributions are not only welcomed, they are essential.

Pretest/Posttest. Each student will participate in both a pretest and posttest on content required to teach English/Language arts. In addition to the test itself, a reflective activity will accompany each product for the purpose of recognizing strengths and identifying areas in need of greater exploration. From the pretest, research topics will be generated so that individual skills can be enhanced in preparation for the posttest.

Research Project. Each student will select a pre-approved topic to research, design a useful summative tool to share with classmates, and present the information on the topic in a user-friendly format utilizing a multi-sensory approach.

Discussion Board Activities. Learning reflections and assignments enable students to explore and/or practice the ideas presented in class sessions and in the required readings. Responses to these assignments should reflect careful consideration of course content as you indicate your own views and share additional resources on the required topics. These discussions will serve as the basis for an emergent personal philosophy on the teaching English/language arts in the secondary special education arena and will also provide additional application ideas. The format of assignments will be consistently designed to have each student respond individually to a prompt and then interact with the responses posted by your peers. Discussion Board assignments should be completed as scheduled as they will often be used as the basis of class discussions and activities. They will be due by noon on the dates noted in the schedule below.
**Integrated Lesson Plan Design.** Each student will develop and share a plan for teaching a unit that both integrates content and differentiates for learner needs. The unit lessons will show an awareness of both SOL and IEP expectations designed to actively involve students in meaningful learning while carefully individualizing to accommodate the diverse strengths and needs of students. The plan will effectively integrate reading, writing, oral language, and language study/research; and provide for authentic assessment. The plan can revolve around a particular literary work, a theme, a writer, a period or genre, as long as the plan builds on the strengths and meets the needs of a diverse student population. The plan should be reflective of the student’s evolving philosophy of teaching secondary English/language arts to the exceptional learner.

**General Comments about assignments:**

- Arrangements must be made with the instructor in advance to submit assignments after deadlines. Points will be deducted from work submitted late. Written documentation of extenuating circumstances will be required to alter deadlines.
- The instructor is solely responsible for assigning grades. Student non-compliance with stated academic, honor, attendance, or participation expectations will result in a ‘0’ for the associated evaluation. Because class participation is a factor in grading, the instructor may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of non-participation.
- Grades of "A" in this course are earned by students who do exemplary, distinguished work. The A/A- student participates actively and thoughtfully in class; completes all required reading assignments and related assignments in a timely and professional way; shows coherence and thoroughness in work products; completes well-organized, well-written work samples; and consistently demonstrates the ability to make connections between theory and practice.
- All assignments should reflect graduate-level spelling, syntax, and grammar. If you experience difficulties with the writing process you may need to access the GMU Writing Center during this course to improve your skills (http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/). APA guidelines (5th edition) apply for all written (word-processed) assignments. All work produced outside of class must be typed.
- Students are expected to (a) attend all classes during the course, (b) arrive on time, (c) stay for the duration of the class time and (d) complete all assignments by due dates provided.
- Common sense and instructor discretion will be the governing forces in dealing with any circumstances that may arise that are not explicitly addressed in this syllabus.

**Schedule of Topics and Assignments**

*(bolded items indicate what is due for the corresponding class meeting)*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPICS</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>Introductions/Course Overview Standards-based Instruction: Using the SOLs</td>
<td>Pretest / Self Reflection</td>
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<td>2/8</td>
<td>Reading/Literature Strand: Theoretical Perspectives</td>
<td>Beers 1-4 DB 1 due</td>
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<td>2/15</td>
<td>Reading/Literature Strand: Classroom Strategies Content vs. Strategies: Finding the Time to Teach Everything to Everyone!</td>
<td>Beers 5-12 as assigned DB 2 due</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Strand</td>
<td>Reading/Study</td>
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<td>2/22</td>
<td>Reading/Literature Strand:</td>
<td>Enhancing Student Progress</td>
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<td>Enhancing Student Progress</td>
<td>External Finds that Might Help: An Academic Potluck</td>
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<td>3/1</td>
<td>Oral Language Strand:</td>
<td>Discussion &amp; Presentation Strategies</td>
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<td>Oral Language Strand:</td>
<td>Grammar Issues and Concepts</td>
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<td>Discussion &amp; Presentation</td>
<td>Writing Strand: The Six Traits (Chapter 11 in class)</td>
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<td>Strategies</td>
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<td>3/8</td>
<td>Writing Strand:</td>
<td>Looking at Ourselves as Writers and Scorers</td>
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<td>Writers and Scorers</td>
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<td>3/15</td>
<td>Writing Strand:</td>
<td>The Workshop Approach to Teaching Writing</td>
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<td>Teaching Writing</td>
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<td>Sharing Your Emergent</td>
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<td>Philosophy about Teaching</td>
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<td>E/LA</td>
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<td>3/22</td>
<td>Updates on Content Knowledge Areas</td>
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<td>3/29</td>
<td>Integrating Concepts to</td>
<td>Enhancing Student Progress: Building Strategies into</td>
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<td>Enhance Student Progress:</td>
<td>Content-based Instruction</td>
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<td>Building Strategies into</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Content-based Instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>Course Wrap-Up Activities</td>
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**Course Evaluation**

In this course, the following numerical grading system will be used:

- A = 94-100, A- = 90-93.5, B = 80-89.5, C = 70-79.5, F = below 70
- All assignments must be turned in on time. Late assignments will not be given full credit. In the case of extenuating circumstances, approval for an extension must be granted in advance by the instructor.

EDUC 597 assignments are weighted as follows:

- Attendance/Participation/In-Class Activities = 10%
- Pretest with reflection = 10%
- Posttest with reflection = 15%
- Discussion Board = 20%
- Research Project = 20%
- Integrated Lesson Plan Design = 25%

**College of Education and Human Development Expectations**

The College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) expects that all students abide by the following:

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions.
Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See http://mail.gmu.edu and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen. Technical Support can be accessed by calling 703-993-8870.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

Approved March 2004

Amie Fulcher is the Special Education Advisor for George Mason University. You may contact her via email at: afulcher@gmu.edu.

**Inclement Weather**
If FCPS closes due to inclement weather, class will be canceled and arrangements will be made for a make-up class.

**Bibliography**
Please refer to the Course Documents section of the Blackboard site for a collection of additional resources that may support your continued exploration of English and Language Arts content.