

## E401 – TEACHING READING

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*Every student needs to know the power of a reading life.*  
– Penny Kittle

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce you to current theory, research, and instructional strategies for teaching reading in secondary schools. Traditionally, the teaching of reading has been seen as the purview of reading specialists teaching in remedial reading classrooms, but instructional standards, accountability measures, and calls for education reform suggest that *all* teachers should be responsible for helping students become better readers. Research also reveals that *all* students benefit from an approach that emphasizes strategies for constructing meaning from all kinds of print, visual, digital, and multimodal texts. Thus this course is intended to help you as an English teacher support your students in developing a “reading life,” as Penny Kittle calls it, by becoming more willing, engaged, and critical readers, both within and beyond your classroom.

If you read the course materials, come to class and participate fully each day, complete the assignments, and reflect on your learning, you should be able to do the following by the end of the course:

- ✓ develop a framework for critical reading instruction based on current theory and research
- ✓ employ teaching practices that promote understanding, interpreting, and evaluating print, visual, digital, and multimodal texts
- ✓ design instruction that supports the needs of the range of readers in your classroom and meets the academic content standards for teachers seeking English language arts endorsement in the state of Colorado
- ✓ understand how literacy contexts, policies, and assessment measures shape definitions of literacy and, consequently, of practices for teaching reading
- ✓ demonstrate professional habits of mind through reflection on and inquiry into your own practice and collaboration with other colleagues in and beyond this course

We will meet these objectives by addressing the following themes throughout the course:

- I. Reading Self: *Developing a Reading ID and Defining Reading*
- II. Reading Community: *Defining “Text” and Exploring Readers’ Ecosystems*
- III. Reading the Word: *Developing Close Reading Practices on and beyond the Page*
- IV. Reading the World: *Expanding Readers’ Ecosystems*
- V. Re-mixing, Reimagining, and Reinventing: *Teaching Reading in a Participatory Culture*

## COURSE MATERIALS

Following are the required texts we will read and discuss in the course. These texts will provide the basis for our class discussions as well as the theoretical and practical basis for your coursework.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

- *Book Love: Developing Depth, Stamina, and Passion in Adolescent Readers* by Penny Kittle
- *Falling in Love with Close Reading: Lessons for Analyzing Texts—and Life* by Christopher Lehman and Kate Roberts
- *Reading in a Participatory Culture: Remixing Moby Dick in the English Classroom* by Henry Jenkins & Wyn Kelley
- *Teacher's Strategy Guide for Reading in a Participatory Culture* (free pdf online)
- One or more books to read for pleasure during class early in the semester. These SHOULD NOT be books you are reading for another class.
- A book or book-length collection of texts you would like to teach to middle or high school students when you have your own classroom
- CO Academic Content Standards for Reading, Writing, and Communicating (free pdf online)
- Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (free pdf online)
- Various articles, chapters, and online resources to be posted to our class Google folder and/or our class website (still in progress)

### SUPPLIES

You will create an Interactive Notebook to use throughout the semester. Please bring the following materials to class everyday:

- Hardbound composition notebook (Look for an inexpensive one with lined paper and, usually, a speckled cover. DON'T buy a traditional journal.)
- Scotch tape and glue
- School scissors
- Colored pencils or markers that won't bleed through the page
- Highlighter

## RIGHTS, RESOURCES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

*Rights to Full Participation:* If you have a physical challenge or special learning needs that may prevent you from fully demonstrating your abilities, contact me as soon as possible so that we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and to facilitate your educational opportunities. Also, please realize that every voice is important in this class. If at any time you feel harassed on the basis of race, ethnic or cultural background, gender, or sexual orientation, or because you are differently abled, please notify me so that we can address the situation immediately and/or make the proper referrals to the appropriate campus personnel.

CSU's Student Sexual Harassment and Violence policy, following national guidance from the Office of Civil Rights, requires that faculty follow CSU policy as a "mandatory reporter" of any personal disclosure of sexual harassment, abuse, and/or violence related experiences or incidents shared with the faculty member in person, via email, and/or in classroom papers or homework exercises. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of personal relational abuse, relational/domestic violence, and stalking. While faculty are often able to help students locate appropriate channels of assistance on campus (e.g., see the CSU Health Network link below), disclosure by the student to the faculty member requires that the faculty member inform appropriate CSU channels to help ensure that the student's safety and welfare is being addressed, even if the student requests that the disclosure not be shared.

*Resources for Student Wellness:* For counseling support and assistance, please see the CSU Health Network, which includes a variety of counseling services that can be accessed at: <http://www.health.colostate.edu>. Also, CSU's Victim Assistance Team is a confidential student resource that does not have a reporting requirement and that can be of great help to students who have experienced sexual assault. The web address is <http://www.wgac.colostate.edu/victim-assistance-team-volunteers>.

*Academic Integrity:* This course will adhere to the CSU Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found in the CSU Policy Library (<http://policylibrary.colostate.edu/policy.aspx?id=442>). Here are the specifics of how this code will play out in E401:

*What constitutes "academic integrity" in this class and why does it matter?* Good ideas reflect hard work, and academic integrity requires that when you've drawn on others' intellectual property, you must give credit where credit is due. In this class that means three things: 1) you

may not present the work of others as your own. When you draw on other sources to support your own ideas, including Internet sources, you must cite them properly; 2) you may not submit identical work in this course that you created for prior courses or for the courses you are currently enrolled in; doing so is considered “self plagiarism”; and 3) you must truthfully state the degree and substance of your contribution to any collaborative projects I ask you to complete in this class. To foster academic integrity, I’ll ask you to accompany course projects with a bibliography, to include a signed honor pledge with major assignments, and to complete group and individual participation statements for collaborative projects.

What specifically constitutes plagiarism and cheating? See the definitions included in the Student Conduct Code at <http://www.conflictresolution.colostate.edu/conduct-code>.

*What happens if I suspect you of academic misconduct?* Depending on the severity of the violation, instructors are within their rights to impose consequences that range from giving you a zero on an assignment, to recommending the loss of the repeat/delete privilege and a notation of “AM” (for academic misconduct) on your transcript, to failing you for the course. The exact wording regarding academic integrity, the consequences of violating it, and the procedures for addressing it can be found in section I.5 of the CSU Faculty and Professional Manual on the CSU website (<http://www.facultycouncil.colostate.edu/files/manual/sectioni.htm>).

**Attendance and Late Work Policies:** Come to class for the entire period each day. You’ll be missed and you’ll be missing something if you don’t. Because the class is so interactive, much of what goes on simply isn’t reproducible outside of class. We will also sometimes complete writing and small-group activities that cannot be made up outside of class. It almost goes without saying that grades inevitably correlate with attendance and participation, but to be crystal clear, excessive absences will override all percentages for class assignments noted in the “Course Projects and Activities” section. See details below in the description of “Flex Days.”

If you must miss class for an established religious holiday or to participate in university-sanctioned extracurricular/co-curricular activities (e.g., competitions, events and professional meetings in which you are officially representing CSU), please let me know in advance so that I can tell you what you’ll miss and we can make accommodations for turning in any work due that day. I also understand that illness or other extenuating circumstances sometimes cause you to miss class or prevent you from submitting your work on time. In these cases, you can use flex days.

**Flex Days:** You are allowed **three** flex days to be used for absences and/or extending the due date on the major projects for this class. (You may not use flex days on other assignments like the Interactive Notebook, etc.). You may use your flex days as you wish as long as the combined number of absences and due date extension on major projects does not exceed three or extend beyond Finals Week. **Furthermore, your course grade drops by one letter for each additional absence.** “Days” count in the following ways:

1) *Attendance and Participation:* Each absence is a “day,” and attendance counts if you are present for, and participating in, the entire class period. If you miss a class OR your arrival to class is excessively late OR if you have the need to leave early for more than 15 minutes, you are using a flex day. (Note: Absences are absences, regardless of cause. This means that the three flex days you’re allotted include any absences related to illness or other emergencies.)

2) *Due Date Extension for Major Projects:* If you need extra time, you can apply flex days toward these major projects only, except for the final presentation. Again, because all other assignments are for use on a specific day, you must submit them on time or receive no credit. Flex days used for this purpose refer to class periods, not calendar days.

## **COURSE PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES**

### I. Class Participation (10%)

Part of professionalism is your accountability to your colleagues and your willingness to share your thinking. Your grade in this category will reflect your attendance and active engagement in class. You are expected to come to class each day with something to say about what you’ve read, an openness to others’ responses and questions as well, and a commitment toward collaborating and constructing understanding together. We will develop specific criteria together in class to flesh out what such “engagement” looks like, but you can also use the following questions to evaluate yourself in this area. I’ll periodically record a “working grade” for your participation on Engrade, the online grade book I use:

- *Am I present and on time for each class? Do I show respect for my colleagues by practicing “dinner table etiquette” (i.e. you refrain from technology use and sidebar conversations that don’t directly connect to what’s happening in class at the present moment, AND you take care of personal necessities prior to class)? To be absolutely specific, I ask the you behave as you would in a faculty meeting when you’re a teacher. That is, I don’t want you to use your cellphone or be on your laptop unless directed to do so in class. I also don’t want you to get up and leave in the middle of class unless you’ve explained why you’re doing so.*
- *Do I participate substantively, but judiciously, in classroom discussion, small groups, and other in-class activities? Do I demonstrate a healthy balance of “stepping up” (i.e., sharing my ideas regularly in order to move our class’s thinking forward) and “stepping back” (i.e., listening well and learning from others by not hogging the floor)?*
- *Do I collaborate well? Am I an innovative thinker? Am I willing to consider ideas that may not map neatly onto my own? Am I being the student in this class that I expect my future students to be?*

2. Personal Interactive Notebook – 25% - I'm excited for you to try out Interactive Notebooks (INBs), a newish, incredible instructional tool used by teachers at all grade levels in all content areas. They function as low-tech textbooks/portfolios that students create themselves to capture and document their learning throughout a course. More versatile than a journal or an all-purpose notebook that students might keep for a particular class, INBs require students to be active learners who generate and interact with course content rather than passive consumers who simply regurgitate it. INBs can house quickwrites, notes, responses to reading, reading records, book lists, terminology, graphic organizers, something called “foldables”—you name it. Because this information is all in one place, students can reference it throughout (and sometimes even beyond) a course. You will get to know INBs by creating one for yourself. My plan is to use them almost daily in class and to build in elements of the other major course projects so you won't have to create those from scratch. I'll grade INBs for completion only.

3. Classroom Ecosystem Project – 25% – This project will allow you to design a system you can use in your classroom to support independent reading and create a community of readers. It will include reader profiles (of yourself and an adolescent reader), a plan for supporting independent reading, a plan for developing a community of readers in and beyond your classroom, and a brief foreword and endnote to contextualize your materials.

4. INB Materials Project and Teaching Demonstration – 25% - For this project, you will work with a small group of classmates to create *your own* set of INB materials for teaching a set of related texts. The project will include a classroom profile; four INB pages you will design to support close reading practices of the featured text(s); a brief description of your plan for assessment; and a brief foreword and endnote to contextualize your materials. You will share these in class in a brief “teaching demonstration” during which you will provide a brief overview of your INB and actually teach us how to use one of the INB pages you've developed.

5. Reading Remix Presentation - 15% - This assignment requires you to synthesize your learning for the entire course by remixing multiple kinds of texts (e.g., print, visual images, digital texts, etc.) to explore one or more of the guiding themes for the course as listed on the first page of the syllabus. As such, it will function as your final for the course. You'll share your remix during the last week of class.

## **GRADING AND COMMENTS**

As you can see, you'll create a wide range of our products for E401, but in all cases, you should compose and present to learn. Depending on this range, I'll adjust my grading and comments accordingly. In other words, I'll use completion checklists, criterion-based checklists, scoring guides, and more extensive responses (written and verbal) for major projects. *Bottom line:* I won't make extensive written comments on everything you write, especially because you'll also be receiving written and verbal feedback from your classmates during workshops and presentations.

### Numerical Feedback:

I'll periodically record grades on Engrade, which allows you to see your scores on individual assignments, percentages in a particular category, and a cumulative percentage for the course. I use the following scale for letter grades and *do not round up* [NOTE: The same numerical pattern holds for grades of B and below.]: **A+** = 98-100 / **A** = 94-97 / **A-** = 90-93

Additional Feedback: If you have difficulty understanding why you earned a particular grade, I'm always happy to talk with you about it in more detail. I ask that you follow these steps first:

1. Make an appointment to meet with me face-to-face. I will not discuss your grade immediately after class on the day that I return your work because I have found that when students are unhappy about a grade, they are reacting to a number rather than to written comments.
2. Before the conference, do your reading. When grading your work, I always have the original assignment sheet and scoring guide at hand, so it's important to understand my feedback in the context of these documents. Re-read these items before our conference; in fact, you may even find it helpful to re-read them in this order: the assignment sheet, the scoring guide, your paper, my written comments, your letter grade. *Bring all of these documents with you to the conference* so that we can refer to them as needed. At that conference, I'll ask you if you've read these things; if you haven't, we'll reschedule.
3. Approach the conference with a professional mindset. I know that your grades are important to you, and I don't assign them lightly. Most important, however, are the skills and dispositions you are developing as a teacher. If you are unable to demonstrate pedagogical skill through the projects you produce and professionalism in the conversations you have, your *students* will be the ones who suffer in the end. Ultimately, they are your “true work,” as Rumi would say, so even in our conversations about your grade on an individual assignment, we must always, always keep them in mind.

**CONFIRMATION OF E40I SYLLABUS REVIEW**

My signature below confirms that I have read the syllabus and have had the opportunity to ask any questions I have about how the course will be conducted and my work will be evaluated. I also understand that I can meet with Dr. O'Donnell-Allen at any point in the semester if additional questions arise.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

**CSU HONOR PLEDGE**

I will not give, receive, or use any unauthorized assistance on the assignments I complete for this course.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_