TLL 2219: Disciplinary Literacy

Syllabus (Summer 2023)

University of Pittsburgh School of Education

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| **Instructor:** | Emily Rainey, PhD |
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*The syllabus online is the official syllabus for this course. Updated versions will be identified as “Revised Syllabus” with date.*

**Course Format**

This course is a 6-week asynchronous online course. We will follow a weekly schedule, with all readings and assignments due on Sundays.

You will have the option of joining a synchronous Zoom class discussion at the semester midpoint. You will also have the option of signing up for one-on-one office hours conversations with me throughout the term.

**Course Description**

This course is appropriate for pre- and in-service pre-K-12 teachers of all subject areas and specialties, reading specialist interns, and others interested in extending their literacy teaching pedagogy.

This course will provide you with an introduction to build foundational knowledge on disciplinary literacy. As a class, we will examine empirical research, reports, and curricular materials to investigate the following questions:

* What are some of the ongoing scholarly conversations in education related to disciplinary literacy?
* How can a focus on disciplinary literacy be a lever for change in varied educational contexts?
* How can practitioners design and facilitate disciplinary literacy learning opportunities for young people?

By the end of this course, you will:

* Understand the importance of disciplinary literacy in K-12 school settings
* Know fundamental theories, concepts, and approaches to address critical issues in disciplinary literacy
* Analyze and create disciplinary literacy learning opportunities for pre-K-12 learners
* Discuss the problem of disciplinary literacy with new perspectives and knowledge

**Course Readings**

The course readings are organized into three modules:

* Module I: concepts underlying disciplinary literacy teaching and learning
* Module II: literacy practices of focal academic field
* Module III: applying disciplinary literacy concepts in your professional work

All articles and chapters will be available online. There is no required textbook for this course.

**Course Assignments**

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| --- | --- |
| **Assignments** | **Point Value** |
| 3 reflections | 30 |
| Substantial contribution to small group discussion | 10 |
| Completed graphic organizer | 10 |
| Project draft 1 | 10 |
| Project draft 2 | 10 |
| Final project (Parts A-D) | 60 |
| **Total** | **130** |

**Course Policies**

**Preparedness and Professionalism**

You are expected to read all assigned readings and participate in discussions or activities for which the readings serve as a springboard. You will be expected to integrate aspects of readings into your assignments.

Remember, this is a professional course as well as an academic course. As part of course participation you should be demonstrating that you are learning and applying professional standards generally expected of educators in matters of timeliness and professional courtesy. Professionalism includes constructively articulating critical peer feedback.

**Grading**

Grades will be assigned on the basis of both process and product. The grading scale is:

A+ = 100 points A = 94-99 points A- = 90-93 points

B+ = 88-89 points B = 84-87 points B- = 80-83 points

C+ = 78-79 points C = 74-77 points C- = 70-73 points

Below 70 = failure

**Late Assignment Policy**

The nature and pace of this course requires that you do not fall behind in assignments. If an extension is needed for an assignment, this must be arranged before the due date and will be granted for only the most extenuating of circumstances. Otherwise, late work will not be accepted.

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is a key component of professionalism. All students are expected to adhere to standards of academic honesty. Any student engaged in cheating, plagiarism, or other acts of academic dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary action. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity at <http://provost.pitt.edu/faculty-resources/academic-integrity-freedom/academic-integrity-guidelines>.

**Grievance Policy**

The purpose of grievance procedures is to ensure the rights and responsibilities of faculty and students in their relationships with each other. The rights and responsibilities of faculty and students are described in the University’s Academic Integrity Guidelines at:

<http://www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/02/02-03-02.html>

**Diversity and Inclusion Statement**

I welcome students of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability, and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of the class.

**Accommodations**

**For Disability**

If you require special accommodations or classroom modifications, then please notify both me and Disability Resources and Services by the end of the first week of the term. The office of Disability Resources and Services is located in 140 William Pitt Union (412-648-7890 [voice or TDD]), and their website is at: <http://www.drs.pitt.edu>. If you have a physical, learning, or emotional disability, please let me know as early as you can so that I can accommodate you.

**For Religious Observances**

If a due date conflicts with your religious holidays, please notify me of which dates will pose a conflict no later than the second week of class so we can make alternative arrangements.

**For Other Special Circumstances**

If there are extenuating circumstances that impact your success, please contact me as soon as possible to schedule an appointment so that we can discuss them.

**Course Schedule**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Date** | **Guiding Questions** | **Readings to Complete** | **Assignments Due** |
| **Module I: What is disciplinary literacy? Why does it matter?** | | | | |
| 1 | June 26-July 2 | * What is disciplinary literacy? Why is it important in terms of equity and justice? | * [Moje](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Id4gKJ-wGzU&t=47s) (2010) [Talk] 1:50-44:00 * Shanahan & Shanahan (2014) | * Reflection 1 (due 7/2) |
| **Module II: Disciplinary reading, writing, and reasoning in a focal area**  **Small group inquiry into one focal subject** | | | | |
| 2 | July 3-9 | * What is disciplinary literacy in your focal subject area? | * Complete readings in group folder | * Substantial contribution to group google doc (due 7/9) |
| 3 | July 10-16 | * What is disciplinary literacy in your focal subject area? | * Complete readings in group folder | * Additional contribution to group google doc (due Sunday, 7/16) * Graphic organizer (due Sunday, 7/16) * Reflection 2 (due Sunday, 7/16) |
| **Module III: Incorporating disciplinary literacy into your teaching**  **Individual inquiry** | | | | |
| 4 | July 17-23 | * Analyze a previous lesson you taught using a disciplinary literacy lens. To what extent was your lesson designed to support students’ disciplinary literacy learning? | * Reread most relevant pieces from weeks 1-3 * Select and read additional pieces as useful | * Project Draft 1 (due Sunday, 7/23) * *Optional: Attend group discussion with Emily (date/time TBD)* |
| 5 | July 24-30 | * Revise your lesson around goals of disciplinary literacy. | * Reread most relevant pieces from weeks 1-3 * Select and read additional pieces as useful * Consult standards as useful: C3, NGSS, CCSS | * Project Draft 2 (due 7/30) * Complete course evaluation. Send proof of completion to me for 1 bonus point. |
| 6 | July 31-Aug. 4 | * Complete final project | * Wilder & Msseemmaa 2019 * Revisit course readings, videos, and other materials as relevant | * Final Project (due Friday, 8/4) * Reflection 3 (due 8/4) |

**Reflection Guidelines**

You will have 3 reflections to complete this semester. Each reflection post should be thoughtful and reflect your careful consideration of the course themes and readings. It is encouraged that you ask questions and make personal connections with the readings.

**Reflection 1 Directions**

**PART A.** Use the weekly readings to consider and write a response to the following questions (length: 1 page):

* What is disciplinary literacy? Why is it important in terms of equity and justice?
* To what extent have you seen disciplinary literacy approaches to teaching in school?

**PART B.** Then, select a lesson plan that you have planned or taught and that you would like to think more about this term. The lesson can be from any subject area and targeted to any grade level. Later this summer you will analyze and revise this lesson for your final project, so ***be sure to pick something that you want to think deeply about***. Respond to the following questions (length: 0.5-1 page):

* To what extent was it a disciplinary literacy lesson?
* What are a few specific features that are or are not aligned with a disciplinary literacy frame?

**Attach the lesson to your submission.**

**Reflection 2 Directions**

You may submit Reflection 2 as a written response (.doc or similar) or a recorded voice memo (.mp3 or similar). If you choose to submit it as a written response, then it should be approximately 1.5 pages long. If you choose to record a voice memo, then it should be approximately 5-7 minutes long. (You can record a voice memo using an app on your phone or make an audio recording using Zoom or similar).

* What seems puzzling/exciting/surprising about disciplinary literacy?
* What role do you see disciplinary literacy playing in your professional work moving forward?
* How do you see disciplinary literacy in relation to equity and justice?

**Reflection 3 Directions**

You may submit Reflection 3 as a written response (.doc or similar) or a recorded voice memo (.mp3 or similar). If you choose to submit it as a written response, then it should be approximately 1.5 pages long. If you choose to record a voice memo, then it should be approximately 5-7 minutes long. (You can record a voice memo using an app on your phone or make an audio recording using Zoom or similar).

* What have you learned this summer about disciplinary literacy?
* What role do you see disciplinary literacy playing in your professional work moving forward?
* How do you see disciplinary literacy in relation to equity and justice?
* What are you still wondering/thinking about?

**Rubric for Reflections**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Meets (10 pts)** | **Approaching (6 pts)** | **Needs improvement (0 points)** |
| **Quality of reflection** | Reflection includes well-reasoned claims based in course readings. It is evident that you are carefully reading and synthesizing important ideas. You identify takeaways for your own professional practice and/or name important questions or tensions that persist. | Reflection includes ideas related to course readings. It appears that you have not read as carefully because the reflection mostly summarizes content, it leans too heavily on direct quotations, and/or it does not engage deeply with the ideas. | Reflection does not engage with ideas from readings or is not completed on time. |

**Small Group Work and Graphic Organizer**

During weeks 2-3 of the course, you will deeply explore the literacy practices and teaching approaches of an academic discipline of your choosing. You can choose mathematics, literature, one of the natural sciences (e.g., biology), one of the social sciences (e.g., history), or a discipline that is aligned with school electives (e.g., music, theater).

Read and consider the ideas for your discipline. Then, use the readings to complete the graphic organizer template. Be sure to cite the readings you are drawing upon as a part of your work.

To support your thinking, you will be grouped with others in class who are interested in a similar discipline and engaged in the same readings. As a small group, you will discuss the ideas together in an online discussion forum. The conversation can be used as part of your graphic organizer. Ultimately, each individual person should complete the tables below in their own words and submit an individual submission.

**Graphic Organizer**

My focal discipline is: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Disciplinary Literacy in My Focal Discipline**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Types of **questions** that drive the disciplinary inquiry of adult professionals | Ways of pursuing questions that adult professionals use (how do disciplinarians **conduct investigations**?) | Ways of communicating that adult professionals use (what are **literacy practices** disciplinarians use to read/write texts?) |
|  |  |  |

**Ideas for Teaching Students My Focal Discipline**

|  |
| --- |
| Specific Examples or Ideas |
| *How could you engage students in disciplinary inquiry?*  *What texts could they read and write?*  *How could you support students’ disciplinary reading, writing, and talk?* |

**Project Draft 1 (Parts A+D)**

**PART A: Lesson Analysis**

1. Attach focal lesson that you selected at the beginning of this term in reflection 1 (scanned pages are fine). Length: variable.

2. Analyze the lesson or unit to determine the extent to which it already supports disciplinary purposes and practices. What will be most important to change in order to use this plan for disciplinary literacy teaching? Why? Connect to course readings and concepts. Length: 2 pages.

**PART B: Promoting Students’ Access to Disciplinary Practice**

*LEAVE BLANK FOR NOW*

**PART C: Promoting Students’ Reflection/Critique/Decision-Making**

*LEAVE BLANK FOR NOW*

**Part D: Works Cited**

**Project Draft 2 (Parts A+B+D)**

**PART A: Lesson Analysis *(REVISED)***

1. Attach focal lesson (scanned pages are fine). Length: variable.

2. Analyze the lesson or unit to determine the extent to which it already supports disciplinary purposes and practices. What will be most important to change in order to use this plan for disciplinary literacy teaching? Why? Connect to course readings and concepts. Length: 2 pages.

**PART B: Promoting Students’ Access to Disciplinary Practice**

1. Adapt your focal materials to create a new disciplinary literacy lesson. Length: variable.

Consider:

* Ways to engage students in disciplinary inquiry
  + What will students be investigating?
  + How will they investigate it?
  + What texts will they read and write?
* Ways to support students’ success
  + How will you support students’ disciplinary reading and writing?
  + How will you support their disciplinary talk?
* Ways of assessing students’ learning
  + How will you gather information about what students are learning?
  + How will you gather information about how their disciplinary reading, writing, and reasoning is developing?

2. Justify your changes. Why have you made the specific decisions that you’ve made? How did you draw from and adapt the ideas in the class readings? What would you want to do next after this lesson? How are your revisions in the service of advancing equity and justice? Length: 2 pages.

**PART C: Promoting Students’ Reflection/Critique/Decision-Making**

*LEAVE BLANK FOR NOW*

**Part D: Works Cited *(REVISED)***

**Project Final (Parts A+B+C+D)**

*Directions: Use all assignments and feedback to produce your final project. Treat all former drafts as* ***drafts****, rather than as final sections to simply plug into place. Avoid the inclination to copy and paste in old writing without doing the work of revising and integrating. Some of the most important thinking work happens at this stage, where you synthesize your ideas once again and try to represent them in the clearest, most precise, and most consistent ways possible.*

**PART A: Lesson Analysis *(REVISED)***

1. Attach focal lesson (scanned pages are fine). Length: variable.

2. Analyze the lesson or unit to determine the extent to which it already supports disciplinary purposes and practices. What will be most important to change in order to use this plan for disciplinary literacy teaching? Why? Connect to course readings and concepts. Length: 2 pages.

**PART B: Promoting Students’ Access to Disciplinary Practice *(REVISED)***

1. Adapt your focal materials to create a new disciplinary literacy lesson. Length: variable.

Consider:

* Ways to engage students in disciplinary inquiry
  + What will students be investigating?
  + How will they investigate it?
  + What texts will they read and write?
* Ways to support students’ success
  + How will you support students’ disciplinary reading and writing?
  + How will you support their disciplinary talk?
* Ways of assessing students’ learning
  + How will you gather information about what students are learning?
  + How will you gather information about how their disciplinary reading, writing, and reasoning is developing?

2. Justify your changes. Why have you made the specific decisions that you’ve made? How did you draw from and adapt the ideas in the class readings? What would you want to do next after this lesson? How are your revisions in the service of advancing equity and justice? Length: 2 pages.

**PART C: Promoting Students’ Reflection/Critique/Decision-Making**

Disciplinary literacy teaching is not only about supporting students’ access to disciplinary ways of thinking and communicating. Disciplines are important but not perfect, and if we were to only teach students how to employ disciplinary ways of thinking we risk perpetuating forms of injustice.

1. With this in mind, adapt your focal materials by adding 1-2 substantial opportunities for students to:

* reflect on disciplinary literacy in relation to their identities and other ways of knowing,
* decide whether or how they will use disciplinary practices, and/or
* critique problematic or outdated elements of disciplinary practice, such as specific norms, conventions, or assumptions.

2. Justify your changes. Why have you made the specific decisions that you’ve made? How did you draw from and adapt the ideas in the class readings? What would you want to do next after this lesson? How are your revisions in the service of advancing equity and justice? Length: 2 pages.

**Part D: Works Cited *(REVISED)***

**Rubric for Final Project**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Exceeds (10 pts)** | **Meets (8 pts)** | **Approaching (6 pts)** | **Needs improvement (0 pts)** |
| **Analysis of Original Lesson (Part A)** | You thoroughly analyze an existing lesson from a clear disciplinary literacy perspective. Analysis includes nuanced discussion of multiple ways that the lesson does and does not reflect disciplinary literacy goals and principles. | You analyze lesson from a clear disciplinary literacy perspective. Analysis includes some discussion of ways that the lesson does and does not reflect disciplinary literacy goals and principles. | You analyze lesson from a disciplinary literacy perspective, but the perspective may be unclear in some places. Analysis misses and/or confuses key aspects of disciplinary literacy. | You do not analyze lesson from disciplinary literacy perspective. |
| **Lesson Revision for Disciplinary Literacy Learning (Part B)** | Your new lesson supports students’ disciplinary inquiry with texts. It includes ways that the teacher will support students’ disciplinary reading, writing, and talk and assess their learning. It is clear that all aspects of the lesson are aligned with one another and in the service of disciplinary literacy. | Your new lesson includes disciplinary inquiry with texts. It includes ways that the teacher will support students’ disciplinary reading, writing, and talk and assess their learning. Most aspects of the lesson are aligned with one another and in the service of disciplinary literacy. | Your new lesson includes some opportunity for students to learn aspects of disciplinary literacy. A strong inquiry frame may be absent, or there may be major areas of misalignment (e.g., the texts are not suitable for pursuing the disciplinary question). | Your project does not include new lesson, or there are not visible disciplinary literacy aspects embedded in the new lesson. |
| **Lesson Revision for Disciplinary Reflection (Part C)** | Your new lesson includes opportunities for students to meaningfully reflect on their identities or ways of knowing. Students are offered opportunities to critique and/or make choices about whether and how they will employ disciplinary conventions/norms/ assumptions. | Your new lesson includes some opportunity for students to reflect on their identities or ways of knowing. Students are offered opportunities to critique and/or make choices about whether and how they will employ disciplinary conventions/norms/ assumptions. | Your new lesson includes an element of reflection, decision-making, or critique. The opportunity may be partial or thin. | Your new lesson does not include opportunity for students to reflect on, critique, or make decisions about disciplinary participation. |
| **Lesson Justification (Parts B and C)** | You thoroughly justify your changes based on disciplinary literacy goals and principles. | You justify your changes based on disciplinary literacy goals and principles. Most claims are warranted and clear. | You offer some justification for your changes. Some claims are warranted and clear, while others are vague or incomplete. | You do not justify major decisions about the new lesson design. |
| **Use of Course Readings (throughout)** | You draw deeply on course readings and course themes to analyze existing lesson and to justify changes to the lesson. It is clear that you have used the course readings and concepts to drive your thinking. | You draw on multiple course readings to analyze existing lesson and justify changes to the lesson. Sometimes there are missed opportunities to draw on course readings or imprecisions in the way the readings are used. | You draw on multiple course readings to analyze existing lesson and justify changes to the lesson. The majority of the citations are superficial (i.e., they read as if they are “tagged on” rather than as if they are driving the thinking). | You do not draw on specific course readings or only use course readings superficially. |
| **APA Format (D and throughout)** | You list all in-text and end references in APA format. | You list all references; there may be minor errors in APA or the works cited list at the end may be incomplete. | You do not consistently use APA. | You do not include references. |