06.675 History, Research, and Theory of Curriculum Design in Language Arts

Three Semester Hours, Spring 2008

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION
MinJeong Kim, Ph.D.
Office: O’Leary 529
Telephone: 978-934-4614
Class Meeting: 4:00-6:30 pm Thursday
Office Hours: 2:00-3:30 Monday and Thursday and by appointment
MinJeong_Kim@uml.edu

OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

In this course, we focus on notions of language, literacy, and culture intertwined with literacy/language teaching and learning both in schools and elsewhere. Even though we discuss these notions separately for heuristic purposes, they are inseparable and each of these concepts is implicated in the other two shaping our understanding of literacy learning and instruction. The purpose of this course is to engage us in the complexities and debates regarding theoretical perspectives and research on language, literacy, and culture that have affected literacy curriculum and learning.

We begin the course with an introduction to the history of research done on concepts of language, literacy, and culture. We then look at the evolution of sociolinguistic and ethnographic research on language, literacy, and culture as well as other modes of inquiry on language and literacies. Most of the course, however, is spent closely examining studies of language, literacy, and culture in classrooms and communities. We want to examine those studies for how they conceptualize language, literacy, and culture, for how they conceptualize the mutual construction of language, literacy, and culture, and for what they can tell us about the nature of education and daily life. We want to explore the questions such studies raise about issues such as cultural diversity, ethnic relations, identity, learning, curriculum and instruction, school-community relationships, and social justice, among others. We also want to examine how these studies have adopted and adapted the concepts, arguments, and methods that others have used. Through investigation and discussion of these studies, we also will be examining the nature of academic discourse (how the authors of the studies have structured their arguments) and engaging ourselves in such discourses.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Critical Reflection (30 points)

You are expected to submit three critical reaction papers to the readings for three particular sessions (approximately 3-4 pages). Pick three sessions that address research approaches or topics that you are particularly interested in exploring; select specific issues that you want to take up from all the readings for a particular session; and critically examine them, showing evidence that you carefully considered all the readings in light of class discussions and your own experiences. Please note that this is not a
summary, rather, you need to demonstrate what YOU are able to appropriate from the readings, making explicit any remaining questions you have and raising further issues to consider.

Possible questions to consider:

- What was the theoretical perspective underlying this study?
- What were the logics of inquiry underlying this approach?
- Pros and cons of this approach
- How does this approach relate to your areas of interest?

2. Conceptual Memos (30 points)

You are to write a series of conceptual memos examining classroom interaction in language arts. We will analyze video-taped classroom interaction. You will be asked to analyze four video clips and write “conceptual notes” on your analysis regarding what you see in terms of the major ideas of this course (language, literacy, and culture). That is, find the MISSING ELEPHANT! Detailed guidelines and a model will be provided in class. A conceptual memo focuses on key concepts – their construction, emergence, variation, situated nature, epistemological and ontological nature, historical context, relationship to other concepts, etc. Although conceptual memos are scholarly works requiring grounding in scholarship and/or data, they are also “creative” pieces that require the arduous exercise of the scholarly / research imagination.

3. A Research Proposal (40 points)

Based on your conceptual memos and course readings, you will develop a research proposal. The paper you write should include the following sections:

- Abstract (200 words)
- Description of the Site/Setting
- Data Collection
- Data Analysis
- Findings
What was learned from this inquiry about language, literacy and culture.

In addition to submitting a written paper, you will give a 10 minute presentation on your research project. The style of presentation should be similar to that employed at professional research conferences such as AERA.

4. Foundations Readings (20 points)

You are to select two of the books below. The books below provide “foundational” understandings related to language, literacy and culture. You may want to form a group that would read the same book so that you can discuss the book with each other. I would recommend reading these books as early in the quarter as possible. I would also recommend “re-reading” the books (even if you do not “re-read” the books until after the end of the semester).


5. Independent Readings (20 points)

You are to select one of the areas below and read at least two books in that area from the lists provided. If there is a book you would like to read that is not on the list, please check with me first. I am asking that you read two books in one area to emphasize depth. If you have a strong rationale for reading across the different areas, please feel free to discuss your plans with me.

**The New Literacy Studies and Education**


**Cultural and Cross-cultural Processes and Education**


**Discourse Analysis and Education**


Globalization, Language, Literacy, Culture, and Education


Language Variation / Language Diversity and Education


---

**Issues of Social and Cultural Identity**


---

1 I want to acknowledge that many of the references in this section were taken from a bibliography on identity created by Richard Beach and David Bloome.


Language, Literacy, Culture and Education as / and Cultural Transformation


COURSE TOPICS AND READING

Jan 31 Overview of Course

Feb 7 Introduction and Overview

Feb 14 A Schema-Theoretic View of the Structure of Knowledge

Feb 28 Piaget’s Social Theory
Vygotskian and Neo-Vygotskian Theory

Mar 6 Learning as Participation in Communities of Practice and Identity Formation
* LOGICS-OF-IQUIRY would be introduced


**Mar 13 Changing Perspectives on Culture, Language and Literacy**


**Mar 27 Language in Use**


**April 10 Cross-cultural issues in Language, Literacy, Culture and Classroom Education**


** Additional Readings To be Added**

**April 24 Language, Literacy, Culture and Identity (race, gender and social)**


**May 8 Presentation**
Logics of Inquiry (these articles will be read throughout the course)


Books and Articles on Interviewing


Books and Articles on Observation


Course Grading System

Although specific grading guidelines may be provided for some of the assignments, the overall grading system for the course is based on the system below. Please note that the UMass system now uses the A+ to B system for graduate standard work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Point structure</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>99-100</td>
<td>Work of the highest professional standard demonstrating independent and exemplary performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>96-98</td>
<td>Excellent work demonstrating independent and high quality performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>91-95</td>
<td>Very good work, indicating consistent and careful thought and attention to the task, but requiring some areas of improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>86-90</td>
<td>Good work, carefully executed for the most part, yet requiring several areas of improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>80-85</td>
<td>Work of graduate standard, but omissions exist or careful analysis is not evident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Graduate Standard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>76-79</td>
<td>Effort is evident, but work indicates lack of understanding of the demands of the task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>70-75</td>
<td>Poor quality work with little attention to detail and the demands of the task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>Work of very poor quality, indicating no understanding of the depth of analysis required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Below 65</td>
<td>Serious neglect or evidence of cheating.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DEFINITIONS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PROHIBITED ACADEMIC PRACTICE AND BEHAVIOR

The following definitions are provided for the information of all students and constitute official notice of prohibited academic practice and behavior.

Cheating is defined as:

1. Misrepresenting academic work which has been done by another as one's own efforts - whether such misrepresentation has been accomplished with or without the permission of the other individual;
2. Utilization of prohibited assistance (whether in the nature of a person or a resource) in the performance of assignments and examinations;
3. Copying of another person's work or the giving or receiving of information or answers by any means of communication during an examination;
4. Utilization of the services of a commercial term paper company;
5. The unauthorized or fraudulent acquisition and or use of another's academic property.

Plagiarism is defined as:
1. Direct quotation or word-for-word copying of all or part of the work of another without identification or acknowledgment of the quoted work;
2. Extensive use of acknowledged quotation from the work of others which is joined together by a few words or lines of one's own text;
3. An unacknowledged abbreviated restatement of someone else's analysis or conclusion, however skillfully paraphrased.

Non-Academic Misconduct
Improper conduct or behavior of graduate students is subject to the University of Massachusetts Lowell Student Conduct Code and Judicial Process. Copies of this document may be obtained from the Dean of Students Office, Cumnock Hall.