# EDRE 4850: Teaching the Tools and Practices of Reading Across the Curriculum

**“Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his deep and continuing needs, is good for him.”**

**–Maya Angelou**

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| Meeting Place/Time: Borman ES  Tuesdays, 9:00 -11:50 am | Office Hours: Tuesdays 8:00-9:00 am or 12:00-1:00 pm & by virtual appointment |
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**DEPARTMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION AND ADMINISTRATION: PREPARING TOMORROW’S EDUCATORS AND SCHOLARS**

The **Department of Teacher Education and Administration** seeks to improve educational practice through the generation of knowledge and to prepare education professionals who serve all students in an effective, inclusive, and equitable manner. Its focus is on the preparation of highly competent educators, researchers, and administrators who employ current theory and research as they fill these important roles.

**Mission**

The Department of Teacher Education and Administration integrates theory, research, and practice to generate knowledge and develop educational leaders who advance the potential of all learners.

**Vision**

We aspire to be internationally recognized for developing visionary educators who provide leadership, promote social justice, and effectively educate all learners.

**Commitments**

We are activists in providing strategies for teaching that are aligned with the core commitments of our UNT Teacher Preparation Program to transform teaching.

**COURSE PREREQUISITES:**

EDRE 3350; Admission to Teacher Education program.

Some of the assignments in your coursework will overlap. We try to think of the curriculum (artificially divided into courses) as integrated. This is a challenge for both the course instructors and for students but in the best interest of learning. In your “teacher life,” you will face similar challenges to integrate across curriculum areas that have been artificially divided.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION, STRUCTURE, & OBJECTIVES:**

**Course Description**: In this course, we will explore the many ways that people use reading across the spaces of their lives, homes, and communities. Together, we will read and discuss texts, essays, stories, and research articles as embodied examples of the transformative power of literacy as a tool to learn, heal, advocate, and share joy. We will reflect on our own reading histories and begin to unpack our schooling experiences, including how we learned to read and write, to theorize and re-theorize what it means to learn to read and write – beyond the written word and into our world.

As such, the purpose of this course is to prepare preservice teachers in the area of reading as a process for meaning-making, as a tool for inquiry, and as a tool for activism. This course will cover various teaching models ranging from skills-oriented to process-oriented to practice-oriented perspectives. Each reading, assignment, and teaching demonstration will focus our minds and hearts toward furthering our thinking around our roles as reading teachers.

**Course Structure:** This is a **field-based course**, and our fieldwork will be aligned with expectations from the university to meet the needs of teacher preparation. We meet at a partnering elementary school, Borman Elementary, for a collaborative experience working alongside students and teachers. We will observe teachers teaching young readers, examine different approaches to teaching readers, and practice noticing and naming the strengths of readers while developing strategies for support. As future educators, I ask that you practice openness and flexibility as we continue to adjust and adapt assignments and experiences to honor our collective goals alongside our community partners. Please note: A criminal background check is required.

*This syllabus is created in a specific context and thus informed by current situations (e.g., residency, Covid), extant research, and predicted needs and expectations for the class. Therefore, it is a working document, and changes in the course format, readings, and/or assignments may be necessary. Any changes will be made by the instructors in a timely manner and will be communicated with students to provide as much advance notice as possible.*

**Course Objectives**: In this course, preservice teachers will,

* Understand that reading development is a lifelong process intertwined with identity and sociocultural knowledge;
* Expand understandings and build on the content of the Early Literacy course taken the previous semester;
* Examine and extend frameworks for teaching reading (e.g., Reading Workshop);
* Select culturally sustaining mentor texts for read-aloud/shared reading and to use as a tool for teaching reading strategies
* Practice teaching literacy using assessment and reflection to inform teaching;
* Engage in asset-based, appreciative teaching to plan for instruction;
* Consider the demands of literacy assessment associated with different audiences and how these forms of assessment can be used to inform instruction;
* Learn the history of policies and mandates regarding the teaching of reading (e.g., the “science of reading”);
* Reflect on your own identity as a reader as well as how your identity influences your teaching practice

## HOW TO FEEL SUCCESSFUL IN THIS COURSE

**Communication:** Communication is really important! Connect with me through email, Canvas, or by phone. I may not be able to respond right away during busy times, but if you do not hear from me within 24 hours, please follow up. A gentle nudge is always appreciated! If the situation is urgent, please text me. For example, if you are unable to attend class due to illness or injury, please text or call me. It is important for me to ensure that you are safe and that we can cover your Eagle Reader. I promise you there is no situation we can’t work through together as long as you let me know what is happening.

I will be available for office hours by appointment. You are welcome to meet me at my office or touch base via Zoom at your convenience. Office hours offer you an opportunity to ask for clarification or find support with class materials and assignments. Your success is my goal!

**Academic Success Resources:** UNT strives to offer you a high-quality education and a supportive environment so you learn and grow. As a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. To learn more about campus resources and how to succeed at UNT, visit [unt.edu/success](https://www.unt.edu/success/) and explore [unt.edu/wellness](https://wellness.unt.edu/). To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to [scrappysays.unt.edu](http://scrappysays.unt.edu/)*.*

## CREATING AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Let’s work together to create a classroom community and culture of belonging, mutual respect, and open communication. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates may surface, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. We are all learning together. ([Code of Student Conduct](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012)) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>).

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

* *Critical Literacy* by Vivian Vasquez
* *Textured Teaching* by Lorena Germán
* Additional readings in Canvas drawn from the professional literature on literacy
* One of the following Middle-Grade books\*:
  + Warga, J. (2019). Other Words For Home. Balzer + Bray.
  + Yang, K. (2018). Front Desk. Arthur A. Levine Books/Scholastic Inc.
  + Jamieson, V., & Mohamed, O. (2020). When Stars Are Scattered. Penguin Random House.
  + Pérez, C. C. (2017). The First Rule of Punk. Penguin Random House.
* Technology requirements:

Course materials and assignments will be posted to Canvas. To fully participate in this class, students will need internet access to reference content on Canvas. If circumstances change, you will be informed of other technical needs to access course content.  Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at [Learn Anywhere](https://online.unt.edu/learn) (<https://online.unt.edu/learn>).

**MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS**

There are six categories of assignments for this course: 1) Reading Identity project (2) Critical Reading Responses (3) Literature Unit (4) Mentoring experiences (5) Book clubs (6) Attendance and Participation. Below is a brief description of each, but *please see Canvas for detailed descriptions and tentative course schedules!*

| ***Assignment*** | ***Points Possible*** | ***% of Final Grade*** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Reading Identity (multimodal)* | *5 points* | *5%* |
| *Critical Reading Responses* | *20 points* | *20%* |
| *Literature Unit* | *20 points* | *20%* |
| *Mentoring Experience(s)* | *30 points* | *30%* |
| *Book clubs* | *15 points* | *15%* |
| *Attendance and Participation* | *10 points* | *10%* |

## **ASSESSING YOUR WORK**

Assignment due dates are subject to change based on context and student needs. If you, the student, need an extension on an assignment, please email me *before* the assignment is due. Always turn in your work – even if it’s late because you will receive partial credit. If I grow concerned about late or missing assignments, I will ask you to meet with me one-on-one. This is not punitive in any way but rather will help me better support you.

The grading scale for this course is as follows:

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 65-69

F = 0-64

**COURSE OUTLINE/CALENDAR**

*\*This course syllabus/schedule is intended to be a guide and may be modified at any time at the instructor’s discretion to enhance students' learning experiences.*

| **Week** | **Topics** | **Assignments Due** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Introduction to Justice-Oriented Literacy Instruction & Theoretical Concepts** | | |
| **Week 1**  August 22 | Course Introduction/  A Dynamic View of Literacy & Critical Literacy |  |
| **Week 2**  August 29 | Creating a Textured Teaching Classroom Landscape | Survey (in class) |
| **Week 3**  September 5 | Cultivating Critical Consumers of Reading |  |
| **Week 4**  September 12 | Honoring Funds of Knowledge in Literacy Classrooms | **Reading Identity project** |
| **Critical Approaches to Language, Identity, & Culture in Literacy Instruction** | | |
| **Week 5**  September 19 | Selecting and Utilizing Diverse Children’s Literature | **Critical Reading Response #1** |
| **Week 6**  September 26 | Community Literacies | **Eagle Reader LP & Reflection** |
| **Week 7**  October 3 | Prioritizing Multilingual in the Reading Process | **Eagle Reader LP & Reflection** |
| **Critical Pedagogical Approaches & Curriculum Practices in Literacy** | | |
| **Week 8**  October 10 | Translanguaging & Reading Assessments from Critical Perspectives | **Eagle Reader LP & Reflection**  **Critical Reading Response #2** |
| **Week 9**  October 17 | Whole group practices: Read Aloud & Shared Reading | **Eagle Reader LP & Reflection** |
| **Week 10**  October 24 | Independent Reading & Conferring with Readers | **Eagle Reader LP & Reflection**  **Literature Unit Part 1** |
| **Week 11**  October 31 | Small group instruction | **Eagle Reader LP & Reflection** |
| **Week 12**  November 7 | Critical Literacy Assessment | **Eagle Reader LP & Reflection** |
| **Week 13**  November 14 | Critical Literacy Across the Disciplines: The Arts | **Eagle Reader LP & Reflection**  **Critical Reading Response #3** |
| **Week 14**  November 23 | NO CLASSES - FALL BREAK! |  |
| **Week 15**  November 28 | Growing Critical Literacy Consumers of Media | **Book club presentations** |
| **Week 16**  December 5 | Final Reflections & Course Wrap-Up | **Critical Reading Response #4**  **Literature Unit Part 2 (Dec. 12)** |

# UNT TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM COMMITMENTS

While teaching has always been a relational and intellectual endeavor, we acknowledge that *teaching is both ethical and political.* We recognize that many practices and traditions in schools today perpetuate long-seated historical and social oppressions. These social inequities are structural *and* socially constructed along dimensions of intersecting identities, including, but not limited to, race, color, ethnicity, national origin and identity, dis/ability, gender identity and expression, sex, sexual orientation, religion, immigration status, language, social class, age, and genetic orientation.

Through our radical imaginations, we can create spaces for critical inquiry and engagement in schools at multiple levels: intellectual, ethical, physical, social, emotional, ecological, and aesthetic. We envision classrooms as inclusive places that serve as complex and just ecosystems that allow for multiple identities, modes of expression, and ways of engagement to thrive together. We do this because we are committed to dismantling oppression. Teachers play an important role in this movement. Our teacher education program supports the development of core values related to:

***Identity*.** Preparing teachers who have agency and critically reflect on their lived experiences and identities to inform their professional knowledge and humanizing pedagogies.

***Inquiry*.** Preparing teachers who value and inquire into the complex identities and intellectual and transformational capacities of children and youth.

***Activism*.** Preparing teachers who create curriculum that responds to children’s and youth’s inquiries and identities, as well as the sociopolitical and socioeconomic conditions of the world outside of schools—in neighborhoods, communities, and society at large.

***Community*.** Preparing teachers who recognize and honor the unique sociocultural experiences and communities of children and youth with whom they work.

We commit to teaching and teacher preparation that takes a transformative stance toward school change. We believe—acting in solidarity with teachers, children, youth, school leaders, and communities—we can radically reimagine and reconstruct schools and, thus, our society

**Teacher Preparation at The University of North Texas Core Commitments**

| **Commitments** | **As Teachers** | **Children and Youth** | **In our Practice** | **To Radically Imagine** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Identity** | **We are** individuals with cultural histories, knowledge, talents, and interests that we use as resources in our teaching. | **We value** and nurture the love, grace, humor, compassion, creativity, patience, joy, and peace young people bring into our teaching spaces. | **We practice** humanizing pedagogies that are asset-based, equitable, and appreciative of who we are and who we are becoming. | **We imagine** schools as spaces where teachers are encouraged and given space to be different in what they do with young people and their communities. |
| **Inquiry** | **We are** intellectuals with a deep understanding of academic content, curriculum development, and flexible pedagogies. | **We value** young people’s knowledge, creativity, curiosity, aesthetics, imagination, and embodied ways of being as essential, educative and liberating. | **We practice** curriculum as critical inquiry and research where children and youth are positioned as capable, knowledgeable and social agents for change. | **We imagine** a curriculum in schools that is shaped by societal goals and influenced daily by events unfolding in the world around us. |
| **Advocacy & Activism** | **We are** activists working against injustice for young people, teachers, and communities rooted in racism and other forms of discrimination. | **We value** and embody caring in all its forms- personal, social, cultural, linguistic, and ecological0 as essential to growing a positive learning and living environment. | **We practice** activism in the curriculum by engaging children and youth in work that contributes to the creation of a more just, more caring, and more peaceful world. | **We imagine** metaphors for schools as nurturing spaces for the whole individual rather than as efficient factories or businesses that produce products and profit. |
| **Communities** | **We are** members of multiple communities- connected in ways that make our successes intertwined. | **We value** inclusive learning communities that connect us within and outside of our classrooms. | **We practice** humility throughout vulnerability; hope in the face of adversity; and resilience in response to our efforts that have fallen short. | **We imagine** schools as sustaining intersecting ways of being, knowing, and languaging. |

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Standards.** The content and activities you will engage with in this course reflect the State of Texas standards for teacher preparation. Following this link you will see the specific standards addressed in this course. Some of the standards addressed in this course are new. Some are extensions of standards engaged with in previous courses. All of these standards will be assessed on the Texas certification exams.

**Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences.** According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to, cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University. Since you will be asked to turn in writing reflecting your own experiences and thinking, using AI (to draft your writing) is not permitted.

**ADA Accommodation Statement.** UNT makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one’s specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time. However, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information, see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu. (UNT Policy 16.001)

**Emergency Notification & Procedures.** UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Blackboard for contingency plans for covering the course.

**Student Evaluation Administration Dates.** Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via *IASystem* Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey, they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at [www.spot.unt.edu](http://www.spot.unt.edu/) or email [spot@unt.edu.](mailto:spot@unt.edu)

**Sexual Assault Prevention.** UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at [SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu](mailto:SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu) or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648.

**Acceptable Student Behavior.** Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct